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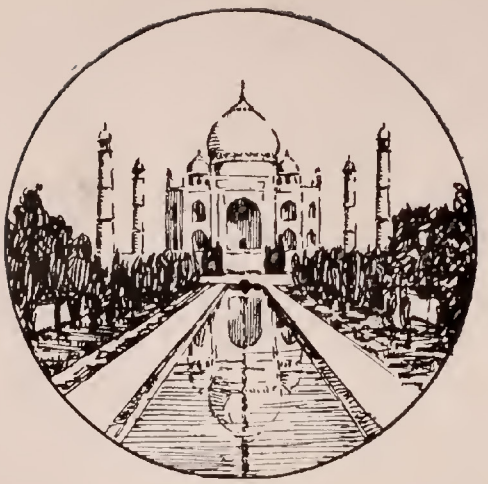

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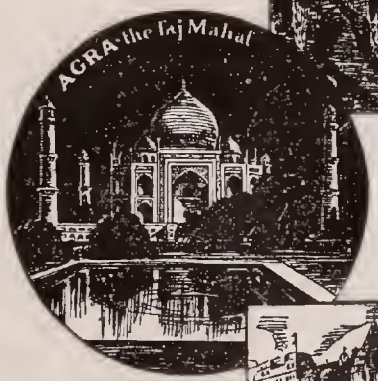

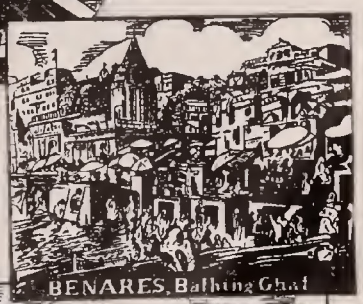

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filmindia

VOL. 7 NO. 2
FEBRUARY, 1941

Editor: **BABURAO PATEL**

A Symphony Of Ram and Rahim

THE New Year brings "Padosi" to the Indian screen. The word "Padosi" means "The Neighbours."

Though primarily "Padosi" is a picture for entertainment, it has a vibrant message to deliver to millions in India. The message is old. It is inherent in the existence of man since Time began. But nearly two thousand years ago it was given a divine purpose by Christ in the immortal Commandment "Love Thy Neighbour As Thyself."

Barring the pious folks, no one cared for this command of the Lord in the West. Through centuries the white man has shed the blood of his brother to pursue selfish ambitions. To enable him to do so more thoroughly he has commandeered the services of the coloured people, firstly, by enslaving them, secondly, by exploiting them and thirdly, by forcing them to an unwilling abetment of crime against humanity.

And yet that immortal command of the Lord "Love Thy Neighbour As Thyself" rings through ages reminding humanity of its divine duty towards a fellow human being.

That message of Jesus Christ is needed more to-day than ever when man lives on man in the most brutal way, mind and intellect can invent.

We see wars and wrecks, bombs and bloodshed and we count the deaths and casualties. From day to day we are posted with the score of killings—a shameful record of human brutality. But this is not the only carnage that man can inflict on man. In multiple other ways man strains his intelligence to invent new methods of torturing his neighbour.

It may be a dirty rumour that may blast the future of a neighbour's virgin daughter, it may be a civil conflict that may ruin both the families, it may be the seduction of a neighbour's wife or it may be any of the thousand and one clashes that lead to covet the neighbour's possessions—they all end in a man killing a man for selfish ends.

Traditions, culture, progress, education, civilization—these have merely remained meaningless words where human greed has stepped in and man has made himself a monster to destroy his neighbour.

In our country, blessed with peace and love for thousands of years, invaders from time to time brought germs of conflict and quarrel and the neighbourhood that was once a blessing has often turned into a curse.

With the foreign rulers in full sway our country is divided the same way—Muslims in one quarter and the Hindus in another—the one looking at the other with suspicion. Both the brothers want to meet in an embrace of reconciliation, but it pays the foreigner, sitting on the fence, to keep them apart.

To meet its own selfish ends the foreign plough has made deep furrows in the once sunny fields of neighbourhood and sown seeds of distrust, hatred and suspicion which yield only a crop of communal discontent, rash political ambitions and fratricidal feud.

When two brothers fight, no one wins. The victor and the vanquished both lose. It is the

foreign referee who wins—wins the land on which a little before the two brothers did shed their blood in a mortal combat goaded by the whisperings of the foreign referee. The brothers do not only lose their lives, but they also forfeit their land which had been till then a sacred heritage of their forefathers.

In the midst of all this strife, which we find mainly in our cities and towns poisoned by the seeds of Western civilization, the one ray of hope lies in the fact that in our villages, which constitute the real India, the Commandment of Christ still rings true and the Hindu and the Muslim, though belonging to different religions, still share their sighs and smiles like twins in the struggles of life unaware of the wedge of strife which their city brothers have suffered to stand between them.

"Padosi" brings this ancient story to the screen with its vibrant and unmistakable message of peace and harmony between the Two Brothers to whom has been entrusted the traditional glory of our land to be passed on from generation to generation as a divine trust.

In the symbolic roles of Thakur, the Hindu and Mirza, the Muslim we see twins born in the same cradle of traditions, smiling and sighing together through a life time of struggle and in the end, like twins, cuddled together in their graves—inseparable during a life time and inseparable in death. "Padosi" is a symphony of Ram and Rahim.

Padosi is not merely a picture, it is a vivid piece of village life. It has no sermons to preach as no words have been used. Its message is silent but unmistakable.

In that silent message is the thought for the New Year: "Love Thy Neighbour As Thyself." That message was first written by the Martyr of Bethlehem in His own blood. And through ages it has been written and re-written by human beings in their own blood.

Will this land, which stands to-day as the only unarmed citadel of peace and love, also have to read that message in letters of blood?

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Propaganda Or Documentary?

By: **Alexander Shaw**

(Alex Shaw is our new expert on documentary films. He is in India to produce documentary films for the Film Advisory Board. In this article, exclusive for "filmindia", he gives us his idea of a documentary. Alex is a modest man and modestly he has given his thoughts, which are worthy of attention.—*The Editor.*)

All films are propaganda films. They are propaganda for a way of living or a way of thinking. It is inevitable and the better the film the more influence this hidden message has. Story writers and directors are bound to put into their work something of their own attitude to life as well as something of the official attitude of their company.

Fortunately their message is usually a simple and a kindly one. Be good to your mother, they say. They say also that Right wins through and that two children in the suburbs are a better thing than a chorus girl in a pent-house. (We all know what happens when someone tries to have both—they get Miss Norma Shearer after them).

The American message is a very wholesome one at the moment. But there have been times, such as during the great gangster cycle, perhaps the greatest period in American films when they preached quite a different message. Be tough, they said. Sock your old mother in the jaw and have three chorus girls in three pent-houses. You can be lords of the earth if you can muscle in on a racket. So all over the world young men turned the brims of their hats down over their eyes. talked out of the corners of their mouths. and planned masterly robberies. Fortunately it usually stopped at the planning, although not always, but the film had proved that it could influence enormous numbers of people and it is only because people are fundamentally sensible, that, when it has preached silly creeds, it has not done more harm.

SUBTLE INFLUENCE OF FILMS

I am not suggesting that after seeing a Donald Duck cartoon the audience are going to become aggressive and boastful as soon as they leave the cinema and knock down all the policemen in Hornby Road. But they are going to be influenced by the implied message of a story film about ordinary people.

It is this subtle influence which makes the film so important. Neither literature nor the stage can so affect peoples' ordinary every day lives and thoughts. I would not suggest that the film can bring about great changes in big things, that any film could do the work of a Plato, a Voltaire or a Marx and change the entire course of human thought but only that it can change peoples' attitudes and ways of living.

Thus all films are really propaganda films. Now propaganda is a beastly word. It is aggressive and patronising. It suggests that there is a small group of people who know everything and that they are going to impose that knowledge on everybody else. The Germans and the Italians have always been very fond of the word and they have made some very good 'propaganda' films.

When I say that they were very good I mean that they were very well made and that at the end of each film they usually had the audience standing on their feet and cheering and up to that point they were good. *But blatant propaganda must stand the test of reason when the lights in the cinema go up and the audience faces the journey home.* The German "Triumph of the Will", a film of the Nuremberg rally, swept the audience with it in a hysterical whirl of banners and torches and faces but when the last bars of the loud emotional music had faded and the lights went up

Mr. Alexander Shaw

the audience were left with a question—what was all that fuss about?

WHAT IS A DOCUMENTARY?

In Britain and America the film which set out to tell people about real life instead of the fantastic lives of the studio characters was called 'documentary' and this change of title was significant. The documentary film was not going to shout and bluster its way across the screens, it was not going to magnify and distort. It set out to inform and sometimes to persuade by telling the truth and dramatising peoples' everyday lives. Such films as 'Drifters', 'Song of Ceylon' and 'Night Mail' opened up a new world of dramatic possibilities. They looked at the stories behind everyday things and turned those stories into screen terms. They showed that it is not necessary to go to night clubs or terrace flats to find drama, that there is drama in everything if people know how to look for it.

Such films are no more propaganda films than the American or French story film. They set out to entertain and in the course of doing so they present the audience with a new way of looking at a subject or they suggest that there is another

(Con. on page 68)

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NALINI JAYWANT

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THE FILM SENSATION OF THE YEAR

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This section is the monopoly of "JUDAS" and he writes what he likes and about things which he likes. The views expressed here are not necessarily ours, but still they carry weight because they are written by a man who knows his job.

Leela Desai Insulted

Little justification can be found for the disgraceful behaviour of the college students of Poona when Leela Desai, the Calcutta film star, was invited to lecture at the Poona Law College on 13th January.

It is reported that when Leela Desai arrived at the College premises the students created an unbearable clamour and confusion and sabotaged her speech by shouts and whistles when she stood up to speak.

The unruly behaviour is reported to have reached such a pitch of mob fury that the lady had to escape through a window.

To say the least this is a very unbecoming behaviour towards an invited guest and outrages all canons of hospitality. And in addition the whole affair is cowardly and does not speak much for the moral fibre of the Poona students. I have always held a very high opinion of the intellectual attainments of the Poona College Students but this shabby exhibition towards a lady guest invites a question about their sense of chivalry and decency.

Almost a similar reception, entire in its rowdiness and unmannerly behaviour, was given last year to K. L. Saigal when he accepted the invitation of the Bombay students. The students demanded a song from him but the poor man had a sore throat and could not oblige. His reluctant refusal became a signal for the students to break out into an unholy demonstration.

While one can understand the warm enthusiasm of the students to meet our film stars, one can hardly find an excuse for such ungentlemanly rowdiness towards a guest.

It is no use telling the students to behave but our film stars should learn a lesson from these incidents and remember it before accepting the next invitation from our students.

Censoring Crime Pictures

It seems certain that the Bombay Board of Film Censors has decided to take no notice of the public protests with regard to its reactionary methods of censoring our entertainment fare and the Board seems to be completely satisfied with its present unenterprising career of least resistance in matters that demand overhaul and silly opposition in matters of no moment.

Three months have passed since the All-India Women's Conference under the presidentship of Miss Sulabha Panandikar passed a resolution that boys and girls under sixteen should not be allowed to see any and every picture that comes to the screen unless the same is certified by the Censor Board as suitable for children under sixteen.

And yet, Mr. Pai, the Secretary of the Censor Board has not moved in the matter. Surely, a man with the educational qualifications and experience of Mr. Pai can understand the gravity of the social problem involved in this question of giving the right entertainment fare to our growing minds. Or does the problem not appeal to Mr. Pai personally because he himself is not blessed with any children?

A case in instance is "Qaidi" the recent picture of the Film Corporation of India. Never before on the Indian screen has crime been more glorified than in this picture. And the hero who overindulges himself in the popular Robin-Hood type of crimes does not even meet with a punishment but stumbles across an accidental death on the steps of a Masjid. "Qaidi" is a terribly suggestive picture for children under sixteen and sufficiently poisonous to warp their minds. And yet it has been allowed to run without hindrance to spread its anti-social theme of crime.

The Bombay Board of Film Censors must look in to this matter immediately and if there is a technical flaw in the present legislation, is it too much to request Mr. Pai, the Secretary, to stretch his imagination a bit and ask the Government for a revision of the law?

Slave-Driving At Bombay Talkies

I was surprised to find Mrs. Snehaprabha Sahu complaining bitterly about the working hours observed in the studios of the Bombay Talkies in their rush for quick pictures. It seems that Mrs. Snehaprabha who was taken on a single-picture contract for "Punar Milan" had to attend the studios at Malad at 7-30 in the morn-

Jyoti has joined the Prakash Pictures and works in "Darshan" a social picture.

ing and return home at nine in the night every day. That was rather rough on the budding star who was recently married and who sacrificed her honeymoon to accommodate the Bombay Talkies.

According to Mrs. Snehaprabha the producers were not even fair to her in other respects. Songs were given to her on the previous day and recorded for the film on the very next day. Dances were not allowed to be rehearsed properly, with the result that the artiste was not pleased with her performance.

What tickled me was that Mrs. Snehaprabha aired her grievance in the presence of her producer Mr. Mukherjee and Mr. Shantaram of Prabhat.

If what Mrs. Snehaprabha says is true—and it seems to be true as Mr. Mukherjee blushed a little—then I can hardly find favour with this phase of capitalism which seems to have got hold of the Bombay Talkies.

While everyone in the industry rejoices the unique success of the Bombay Talkies in producing astounding hits like "Kangan" and "Bandhan" one would not like to feel that all this success was secured by a relentless slave-driving of the artistes.

I invite the attention of the directors of the Bombay Talkies to this complaint and hope that they will introduce a little more humanity in their work.

Even the modest little Ahmed Abbas once described Mr. S. Mukherjee as a "smiling slave-driver" while working for the Bombay Talkies on the script of "Naya Sansar." And Ahmed Abbas is not a complaining sort.

Visual Education With Invisible Plans

Mr. Claude Scott, the Director of Information to the Government of Bombay, must be congratulated on the efficient hurry with which he tried to justify his scheme for rural propaganda.

Mr. Claude Scott.

As soon as the January issue of "filmindia" was out the Director of Information who had previously thought that it was "too early" for the tax-payers to know anything about his pet scheme suddenly arranged its inauguration by His Excellency the Governor of Bombay at Turumbha, a village in Thana District, on the 21stJanuary.

On the 22nd January Ambalal Patel of the Central Camera Co. who has floated a new company called the Educational Films of India suddenly thought of "Educating India's Millions" and published an advertisement in the "Times of India" advertising several 16 m.m. films such as: "A Day In Bombay", "Village Fires", "Tempting The Devil", "The Birth of Cloth", etc. with prices ranging between Rs. 100/- and Rs. 175/- for a copy. By the way, Ambalal Patel is reported to have been in close collaboration with the Director of Information in his new scheme.

On the 23rd January, for the first time in the hundred and odd years history of the "Times of India" that solitary rampart of Government defence came out

George Brent and Brenda Marshall in "South of Suez" a Warner picture.

with a first editorial in support of Mr. Claude Scott's scheme, "congratulating the Government on their enterprise in devising and putting into operation this extremely valuable scheme." Never before in the history of the paper did it show such a refreshing interest in the welfare of the Indian villagers through films.

While earning a huge annual income in advertising from the Indian film industry, the "Times of India" had never before supported the Indian film industry in its editorial columns. But this time the pleasantly surprising departure was probably due to the fact that Mr. Claude Scott was once a news editor on the paper. While I don't at all agree with the opinion expressed by this prominent paper, I nevertheless welcome its active interest in Indian films.

The Fancy Scheme At Last

Let me now review Mr. Scott's scheme, information about which has come late as usual—late in the sense that the tax-payers, as usual, are already committed to the expenditure without their previous consent or knowledge.

The Government of Bombay have so far purchased one hundred 16 m.m. Kodak projectors, with 72 wattage 6 voltage and operated on dry batteries at the initial cost of Rs. 44,100. And all these projectors were purchased from a single firm viz. The Central Camera Co., owned by Ambalal Patel.

The Cinema shows are intended to be held regularly in even the smallest villages in the Province and a start will be made with Ahmedabad, Ahmednagar, East Khandesh and Belgaum districts.

This time as an Editor, slick and smart, Mubarak comes back again to the screen in "Naya Sansar" a Bombay Talkies' picture,

Khursheed looks seductive in "Pardesi" a Ranjit picture.

Just at present the Government have in hand 20 films out of which 5 prints have been purchased at Rs. 100|- each from the Educational Films of India (in other words: Ambalal Patel). Further supplies are expected to be taken from the following sources: Film Advisory Board and Ambalal Patel with the assurance that "any film submitted by any producer will be considered and, if *it is considered suitable,* prints will be bought." By the way Mr. Claude Scott will be the sole judge of its suitability. .

The total expenditure so far has been Rs. 54,100 and the recurring working expenditure will be Rs. 3,000 per month and yet the Government assure us that no additional staff is engaged and that the scheme will be operated by existing Government officials and voluntary workers (one voluntary worker known to us is, ofcourse, Ambalal Patel).

The laboratory where the Government will reduce films from 35 m.m. to 16 m.m. is owned by the Central Camera Co. (that is, by Ambalal Patel).

The subjects that will be shown will be agriculture, health, sanitation, rural uplift in general, war and general knowledge.

That is in short the whole scheme which Mr. Claude Scott without previous experience of this particular subject has imposed on the province.

Just do as I say—

Pour a few drops of Amami Wave Set into the palm of your hand—then comb them into your hair.

First make the deep broad waves —the simple directions plainly show you how. Then the curls —just where you want them.

Secure the curls tightly with a few pins. They will quickly dry. Then comb them out and reset naturally over your fingers.

and see how easy it is to make a perfect setting

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While I entirely endorse the benefits of visual education and approve of the necessity of the Government supporting and subsidizing a scheme, I must protest when I find that all this money that has been spent, is being spent and will be spent, is at the sweet disposal of people who, in my opinion, are not qualified to be in charge of work of which they have no previous experience.

Rather Awkward Questions

With regard to the present scheme, someone should answer the following questions:

(1) Why did the Government buy all the hundred 16 m.m. projectors from Ambalal Patel a dealer of Kodak and why were they not bought directly from Kodak?

(2) Why were not the other dealers in Bombay approached for competitive prices?

(3) Knowing that each projector costs Rs. 410/- Ambalal Patel should have earned Rs. 10,000 and odd as commission as the discount allowed to dealers by Kodak on this article is 25%. Why was a single firm allowed to benefit thus when it was possible for other dealers to buy the projectors from Kodak and supply the Government?

(4) Why did the Government not approach the Kodak office in Bombay in view of the wholesale nature of the order and demand concession from them in the prices? Does the Government know that firms like Kodak give special concession directly to consumers, especially provincial governments and public institutions, on wholesale orders?

(5) Where was the necessity of buying a hundred projectors in lump seeing that it is not possible to put all the projectors in use immediately?

(6) How can the Government provide programmes every fortnight for 100 projectors for "even the smallest villages" with 20 films in hand?

(7) If no extra staff is to be employed and if Government officials and voluntary workers are expected to operate the scheme, where is the monthly Rs. 3,000/- to be spent?

(8) Has the Government appointed a Committee or a Board of judges to decide upon or to select the right type of films for rural uplift? Or will Mr. Scott be the absolute judge?

Someone must answer these questions if it is realized that those who actually shell out the money have a right to know what is being done with their money, why and how.

While I wish every success to this visual education scheme I cannot help but feel that like other half-cooked schemes, this one is also destined to fail.

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SANTA FE TRAIL

W. R. Burnett's
Most Sensational Story
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'Season's Biggest Comedy
HONEYMOON FOR THREE
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This space is contributed free by the Editor of 'filmindia' and the blocks are supplied free by the Express Block Co.

Stop This Waste Of Public Money. Film Advisory Board Must Be Overhauled. Enough Of This Dictatorship.

By: **BABURAO PATEL.**

On the 27th January I was "invited" by the Deputy Commissioner of the C.I.D. and shown certain papers belonging to the Film Advisory Board and warned that in the event of my publishing the said papers in toto or any extracts therefrom, I would make myself liable under the Defence of India Rules, as it was considered, naturally by the officer, that such publication would interfere with the war effort of the Government of India.

On enquiring from the officer whether this action was being taken at the instance of the Film Advisory Board, he did not commit himself to any definite reply.

After subsequent enquiries I found out that the said action was inspired by the Government representative on the Film Advisory Board. If this is true I cannot understand why such an obsolete and time-worn procedure was adopted to warn me.

It is already accepted that at the end of such warnings there is often the jail waiting for those who refuse to take up the mild hint. But has the jail any terrors left for any nationalist?

This action seems to have been taken over and above the heads of the other members of the Film Advisory Board who confessed complete ignorance of the whole thing when questioned. It would have been a good procedure if the Chairman at least had been consulted before reporting the matter to the police as the Government would then have got one more opportunity of saying that it was with the "unanimous" approval of the members of the Board, several of whom are leading Indian producers and distributors.

I am a militant nationalist and do not believe in passive resistance nor do I belong to any policy or party ticket. I am one of those millions in India whose approach to the problem of Indian freedom is individual and who believe in doing their bit to attain the goal of freedom in as constitutional a way as is possible under the present circumstances. I feel, and sincerely, that Britain must win this war not merely for her own sake but also for the sake of other subjugated nations of the world. Firstly because the evil that faces us as an alternative in the event of Britain losing the war is too terrible to imagine and secondly because I feel that it will be easier for us to settle our quarrel of freedom after the war with the British whom we know for 150 years and know too well their good and bad points. Purely therefore from the selfish point of view of a man who believes that his country should be free from the yoke of foreign domination as soon as possible, I am prepared to contribute all my efforts with the others in the field to help Britain to win this war soon. Sooner she does so, sooner shall the Indians be able to revive their own struggle for freedom.

This is how the bride Kalyani steps out in "Prabhat" a Tarun picture.

Mr. Desmond Young, the Chief Press Adviser to the Government of India, is mainly responsible for the affairs of the Film Advisory Board, as they are to-day.

THE FILM ADVISORY BOARD

With this preamble I proceed to criticise the activities of the Film Advisory Board with one solitary object in view and that is that its working should be so efficiently organised that its efforts may contribute solidly towards winning the war for the Allies.

The Film Advisory Board was formed on the 4th of July 1940 by Mr. Desmond Young, Chief Press Adviser to the Government of India. Its first personnel was nominated

Mazharkh n and Hadi meet after a very long time in "Akela" a Great India picture directed by Pessi Karani.

by Mr. Young probably guided by his own sweet will. The members were as follows:

Mr. Chandulal Shah, the Chairman (a producer).

Mr. C. B. Newbery, Vice-Chairman (A distributor representing American interests viz. 20th Century Fox).

Rai Bahadur Chunilal (a producer).

Mr. Chimanlal B. Desai (a producer).

Mr. Baburao K. Pai (a distributor).

Mr. M. B. Billimoria (a distributor).

Mr. J. B. H. Wadia (a producer).

Mr. M. A. Fazalbhoy (a Cine-machinery dealer).

Mr. A. Rowland Jones (a distributor representing foreign American interests viz. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer).

Mr. A. A. Walter (a distributor also representing foreign American interests viz. Warner Bros.).

Mr. Sohrab Modi (a producer).

Mr. Kapurchand Mehta (a distributor).

Sir Richard Temple (representing a producing firm).

Mr. H. W. Smith (of the Times of India representing the Government of India on the Board).

The offices of the Board were till the last month situated in the premises of the "Times of India" and Mrs. Smith, a Secretary of Mr. Smith was appointed as Secretary of the Board.

Amongst others aims and objects of the Film Advisory Board the following are noteworthy:

(1) The Board has been formed to *assist* Government in putting before Indian public *films of interesting war subjects* and others of informatory value.

(2) The Board will discuss suitable subjects for filming and the Government representative will receive them and *if approved, obtain sanction for the production* after obtaining an estimate of cost.

(3) Every effort will be made to see that all cinemas exhibit the films. No payment will be made to cinemas for exhibition as *it is considered that the films will be of sufficient interest to be welcomed by the public.*

(4) When payment is made by the cinemas for exhibiting these films, the amount received will be sent to the Secretary of the Board for credit to Government.

In connection with the formation of this Board, I beg to state that

Maya and Gulab create some interesting situation in "Madhusudan" a Circo picture.

the procedure of nominating members at the sweet will of one person, namely Mr. Desmond Young, is to say the least, hardly constitutional and certainly not in keeping with the democratic traditions of the British Government. Admitting for a moment that the Board acts merely in an advisory capacity it was still necessary that different public institutions should have been represented on the Board by the method of asking institutions or associations to elect their own representatives on the Board. The method of nomination followed by Mr. Desmond Young, therefore, seems a bit too dictatorial for the present times.

Nalini Jaywant makes her debut in "Radhika" a musical produced by National Studios.

In my opinion a Film Advisory Board, mainly intended as at present for producing propaganda films to help the country in its war effort, should not have had any representatives of the vested interests in the motion picture industry on its Board. An Advisory Board of this nature should have had people of experience, eminence and education who represent institutions like the University of Bombay and other cultural institutions in this country. Only people having a splendid background of education and knowledge and experience of mass psychology can be in a position to advise the Government what would be good propaganda in these times. I doubt whether film producers, film distributors and machinery dealers are sufficiently qualified to advise Government on this vital activity during war times and moreover there is a likelihood of these people being personally benefitted through the activities of the Board.

That revolver is unnecessary for so charming a victim as Madhuri, but Ghory does not seem to understand it in "Shadi", a Ranjit picture.

While disagreeing with the choice of men I would like to know why the democratic method of representation by election was not followed by Mr. Desmond Young if he had to take people from the Indian film industry.

FOREIGN INTERESTS ON THE BOARD

Another point that strikes me as rather unusual, and possible only in this country, is the nomination of the representatives of three foreign companies like Metro, 20th Century Fox and Warner Brothers (all American firms) on the Film Advisory Board which is essentially an Indian body under the Government of India. I wonder whether in England or in America foreign representatives would be taken on a similar administrative body of the Government. But in India it seems that anything can be done.

Referring to the appointment of the Business Manager of the "Times

of India", as the representative of the Government one wonders by what particular qualifications, experience or privilege can Mr. Smith be nominated as the representative of the Government. Would it have been too awkward for the Government to have appointed an eminent journalist like Mr. S. A. Brelvi of the "Bombay Chronicle" or if they did want an Englshman, a gentleman like Mr. B. G. Horniman of the "Bombay Sentinel"? In my opinion both these persons would have been more suitable for the job than Mr. Smith. If Government were anxious to secure the fullest co-operation of the Indian members of the Board as also of the Indian film industry in general, nothing could have been more popular to secure this co-operation than the appointment of a pro-nationalist individual.

THE BOARD HAS FAILED SO FAR

During the eight months of its existence the Board has been able to put out hardly seven or eight propaganda films produced by different people in different studios and seeing these films let me frankly state that none of them can be called a real propaganda film designed to meet its primary purpose of aiding the war effort.

Elsewhere in this issue Mr. Alexander Shaw writing on propaganda films says: "*the blatant propaganda must stand the test of reason when the lights in the cinema go up and the audience faces the journey home.*" I doubt whether films produced by the Film Advisory Board so far will stand this test of reason as suggested by Mr. Alexander Shaw, the documentary expert now working on the Board.

Take for instance the film "Voice Of Satan." It was so much oversprinkled with blatant propaganda that it defeated its very purpose. Propaganda to be effective must be subtle and as Mr. Desmond Young himself says: "*the essence of propaganda is that it shall be concealed as far as possible.*" I would like the members of the Board to point out a single film produced by them so far, passing this test. Therefore to that extent all the effort of the Film Advisory Board, so far, has been wasted, and which conclusion is forced on us, inspite of ourselves.

SLAVISH STATUS OF THE MEMBERS

Dwelling upon the aims and objects of the Film Advisory Board it is not very encouraging to know that the Board has been formed merely to *"assist"* Government. Similarly, the Board is expected to discuss suitable subjects and *submit them for approval to Government representative* who will later on obtain sanction for production.

All this makes the position of the members of the Board rather servile and of no consequence. In short it means that even if all the members of the Board were to arrive at a unanimous decision regarding a certain subject for production, the two Government representatives, namely Mr. Smith and Mr. Desmond Young, could still turn down the unanimous suggestion of the Board without giving any reason and still do what they liked. If this is the position in a nut shell, I would like to know where was the urgent necessity of appointing a Board at all and making a pretence of establishing a democratic institution when Government could have well created a department with Mr. Smith and Mr. Desmond Young as the Lord and the Overlord. If the Government had done that I would have had no quarrel with them today, because in these times of emergency any such action would have been condoned. But the pretence of democracy is too much to pass over.

THE APPOINTMENT OF ALEXANDER SHAW

Right from the beginning the affairs of the Film Advisory Board have been managed not in keeping with the democratic traditions of the British Government but more in the fashion of the totalitarian countries of Europe. Mr. Desmond Young or his Bombay representative Mr. Smith has been the deciding voice in all matters regarding the activities of the Film Advisory Board.

Let me take for instance the appointment of Mr. Alexander Shaw as an expert on the Board. Till the 27th of August the members of the Board did not know about this appointment. Evidently, Mr. Desmond Young had been in negotiation with the British Ministry of Information and took up Mr. Alexander Shaw at the "recommendation of Mr. Beddington", Head of the Film Division and as Mr. Young knew Mr. Beddington well, he *"unhesitatingly accepted his recommendation"* and took up Mr. Alexander Shaw who was described as *"technically highly competent and personally very agreeable."*

Before getting this expert from England no attempt was made by the Government of India to find out whether there were people in this country who could have possibly helped the Government in doing the work for which the expert was called. Nor did the members of the Board know exactly, on that day, the qualifications of Mr. Alexander Shaw. In a meeting of the Board which was held on the 28th August 1940, a telegram of the Chief Press Advisor was read to the members of the Board and the appointment of Mr. Alexander Shaw was placed for approval before the members.

Immediately the appointment of Mr. Alexander Shaw was known, some papers in the country raised a small hue and cry and to justify their action the Board came out with a press communique on November 19th in which they state *"Mr. Shaw's engagement, which is for one year, was unanimously approved by the Film Advisory Board, composed of leading Indian producers and distributors under the Chairmanship of Mr. J. B. H. Wadia of Wadia Movietone."* The meeting which unanimously approved the appointment of Mr. Alexander Shaw was held on the 28th August with an attendance of eight persons out of fourteen and under the chairmanship of Mr. C. B. Newbery, as Mr. Chandulal Shah was absent. I am not inclined to check up the technical flaws in the press communique, as mistakes will always happen in human efforts but I certainly object to the procedure of making this appointment without the previous consent of the members of the Board or without even telling them what

were the exact qualifications of the man who was being brought in.

We are told that Mr. Alexander Shaw has been appointed for one year but Mr. Jamshed Wadia who is now the Chairman, after the resignation of Mr. Chandulal Shah, welcoming Mr. Shaw admitted having had a "glimpse into Mr. Shaw's broad outlook on life in general and films in particular and hoped that at the end of the year, Mr. Shaw would find ample opportunities of revising his decision to return to England." Does Mr. Wadia thereby imply that Mr. Shaw would be with us longer than a year?

HULLO, MR. BEDDINGTON

Reverting to Mr. Beddington, Head of the Film Division on whose recommendation Mr. Alexander Shaw was taken by Mr. Desmond Young, I beg to reproduce the following extract from the *"Spectator"* a leading paper in London in which Basil Wright writes as follows: *"After ten months of a total war the Film Division is still largely a waste of the public's money. It has announced no coherent plan, within the framework of which its week-to-week film policy could be shaped and reshaped according to immediate needs. It has failed to mobilise the immense good-will of the British film industry. It has even failed to make more than a handful of suitable films, and, if suitable films have been made it has delayed or bungled their presentation to the public."*

That is the state of affairs in England in the Film Division of which Mr. Beddington is the head and Mr. Desmond Young, our Chief Press Adviser, takes the recommendation of such a man "unhesitatingly" and presents us with Mr. Alexander Shaw.

THE ANGLO-INDIAN PRESS

The attempt made by the '.Times of India" and by the "Illustrated Weekly of India" to lend a moral support to the Government in the appointment of Mr. Alexander Shaw is unique and original. The "Times of India" says in its first editorial of the 23rd January 1941 as follows: **"It is no disparagement of the Indian Film Industry to say—what must be admitted as a fact—*that no one belonging to it has a thorough knowledge of the documentary film*, mainly because this type has never been exploited for the commercial market here."** While, the "Illustrated Weekly" in its issue of 2nd February 1941 writes: "India, so far from resenting Mr. Shaw's presence here, ought to be grateful to him, because he will be teaching India something about a vast untouched field. *Who will deny that there is not a single man connected with the Indian film industry who can claim to be such an expert on the documentary?"*

Well, I deny and I challenge these writers to come out and discuss with me and convince me to the contrary. As far as I know we have at least half-a-dozen men who can do, if not better, at least as well as Mr. Shaw will do in this country and this statement of mine will be better proved when we summarise Mr. Shaw's work on the eve of his departure from India.

By the way, I should like to know why such blatant attempt was made by these two Anglo-Indian papers in supporting the appointment of Mr. Shaw if the Government of India feel that the said appointment was absolutely correct and founded on merits. It is rather unfair to Mr. Shaw that so obvious a moral support should be given to his appointment, as I personally feel that Mr. Shaw, after all, may be knowing something useful in this field of documentaries. If the gentleman has been appointed on pure merits where was the necessity of finding such noisy justification for his appointment?

I have no personal quarrel with Mr. Alexander Shaw and I agree with Mr. Desmond Young that personally he is a very agreeable person. But I object to the procedure that was followed in his appointment. Where is the sense in all the talk that is doled out to us about Dominion Status, Democracy, Freedom of speech etc. month after month from Simla, Whitehall and other high quarters if the executives of the Government insist on perpetuating their old bureaucratic methods which should have by now become obsolete?

THE OVERSEA GUARANTEE

Introducing Mr. Shaw and justifying his choice and appointment before the Board, Mr. Desmond Young is reported to have said that the British Ministry of Information had not only agreed to pay more than half of Mr. Shaw's salary but had also promised a contribution of no less than £10,000/- for twenty films in the form of a grant of £500|- for each film. He further stressed that though Mr. Shaw was not a representative of the Ministry of Information, still, as they had guaranteed so much money they would naturally like to have their interest watched by a person whose appointment met with their approval.

The imposing extent of the amount promised by the British Ministry of Information naturally silenced the members of the Board who must have become dumb by now to protest about the appointment any more. With regard to this aspect one would like to know how many films Mr. Shaw would produce in a year of his stay in India and whether any films produced thereafter, without the active assistance of Mr. Shaw, would be still accepted by the British Ministry of Information at the price mentioned by them.

I believe that at the most Mr. Shaw would produce three films in this year and the remaining seventeen, if at all produced, will have to be under the absolute control of the Board and without the help of Mr. Shaw. Where then is the virtue of this guarantee which cannot be fulfilled within the specified period of one year? Strangely enough, Mr. Desmond Young doesn't tell us what part exactly of the salary of Mr. Shaw would be paid by the British Ministry of Information. It is just "more than half." In this connection, is it true that some copies of the films already produced by the Board and sent to the British Ministry of Information were returned as unsuitable being "too amateurish for theatrical exhibition"? If this is

true then what would be the fate of the films that may be produced after the departure of Mr. Shaw, assuming for the moment, that Mr. Shaw will atleast produce films acceptable to the British Ministry of Information?

AND NOW THIS SHIVDASANI

Another example of the Board's absolute methods is the appointment of the Office Manager. One Mr. Shivdasani who was once the manager of a film studio that failed and who was till recently working as a Salesman in the Agfa Photo Co., which firm sold raw films to producers, has been recently appointed as Office Manager of the Film Advisory Board on a salary of about Rs. 600/- a month.

This important post and at that high salary should have been advertised in the newspapers in the manner of the Public Services Commission and applications invited therefor. But the Board seems to be having its own methods of doing things and has proceeded with the appointment in a rather strange way. Probably afraid of being overhelmed by thousands of applications, the Board appointed a Committee to select a person for the post.

The Committee which was composed of five persons, including the Government representative, evidently took a bird's-eye-view of the persons round the corner and chose three persons out of which one was decided upon by the Committee members and approved by the Government representative, Mr. Smith and that one was placed before the Board meeting and the appointment was confirmed.

Once again I object to the procedure of this appointment. Why was this appointment not advertised in the newspapers and why were not the exact qualifications for the post defined? Again, what specific qualifications has Mr. Shivdasani which qualifies him exclusively for this post? As far as I know Mr. Shivdasani, and I know him personally, like Mr. Shaw he is a very agreeable person, but his only experience in this line has been the management of a short-lived studio, selling raw films and having social contacts with the producers. Beyond this, I doubt, whether he has got any further technical qualifications to hold the post. How is he specially qualified to hold an all important position which demands an experience and a perfect understanding of the propaganda work in hand and in addition a knowledge of film distribution?

As in the case of Mr. Shaw, is Mr. Shivdasani the only man in India, in the opinion of the Board, who can fill this post? I can point out a dozen men working in the industry at present who could have filled the post with greater qualifications.

HERE IS THE WAR EFFORT

Reverting to the programme of production as executed so far by the Film Advisory Board, I have to state unhesitatingly that the films so far produced by the Board defeat their primary purpose of propaganda and do not in any way contribute towards the country's effort to win the war. The future programme seems to be equally barren as is seen by some of the features expected to be produced: (1) "The Grand Trunk Road", showing the problems of transport, (2) "Thirsty Lands", showing the irrigation of the country, (3) "The Dak", mainly about the Post and Telegraph Offices in India, (4) "Hooghli Pilot", showing the romance of the river with its preventive services etc., (5) "The District Officer", a day in the life of an I.C.S., (6) "Four Hundred Million People", the story of the census etc.

By what stretch of imagination is it expected that these subjects would in any way help the war effort? They may make good documentaries but I doubt whether they will in any way make the Indian people more war-minded. If it is the principal aim of the Film Advisory Board to produce *"films of interesting war subjects"*, have these subjects in any way to do anything with the war? Other films which are planned are two-minute and five-minute shorts with some Army and Navy subjects which will at the most act as just so many advertisement trailers of the Army and the Navy.

NO WASTE PLEASE

The affairs of the Film Advisory Board are of a great moment to the taxpayers because the Board is expected to spend this year approximately four lakhs of rupees in production and distribution of short films of different variety, including the maintenance of the organisation. During these times of war when every rupee that we spend must be spent with the fullest justification and maximum advantage and must return to us its full value. It is necessary to see that at least the Film Advisory Board does not waste any money. This purposeful criticism is therefore pointed to avoid any waste so that the entire effort of the Board may fully contribute towards winning the war.

In this connection it should be noted here how similar activities have fared in England. The "Economist", an English Weekly writing editorially in its issue of 14th September 1940 says: *"so far, not one of the Ministry of Information's activities at home has won even qualified general approval, in official or unofficial circles; and the Select Committee's report on the Films Division is another story of inefficiency, lack of co-operation and misdirected energy"* ..... "The Committee considers the British Council's news reel, composed of selections from the five news reel companies, to be superior to the Ministry's (Ministry of Information) news reel, which is also distributed abroad, and recommends that it should be the official news reel for Empire and foreign countries" ..... "The Committee further recommends that the Ministry of Information should abandon altogether any direct sponsoring of feature films, which are in danger of being out of date before they are completed." This shows in short what a muddle the British Ministry of Information has created in England where they certainly know a little more than we do in India about these things.

Writing on the waste of money in war activities *"John Bull"* in its issue of 9th November says: *"in re-*

cent months, a considerable part of the national resources is being drained away through carelessness, inefficiency, muddle and plain tomfoolery. ONCE AGAIN, THEREFORE, WE SAY "DAM THIS WASTE! STOP THE LEAKS AND WHERE NECESSARY, SACK THE DUFFERS."

Writing pointedly about films 'John Bull' further states: *"That our official films for home propaganda have been almost a total loss because the Ministry of Information has never made up its mind what it wants to "put over."*

"That our 'documentaries' are too late to be good, and reach no more than a third of the kinemas even then.

"That the bulk of our film propaganda effort in foreign countries has been left in the hands of British Press Attaches, who have, with rare exceptions submitted no reports whatever, and don't apparently, attach the slightest importance to pushing this particular and important brand of British goods in the foreign market.

"WE CONCLUDE THAT A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF ALL THE TIME AND MONEY SPENT ON BRITISH PROPAGANDA FILMS HAS BEEN A DEAD LOSS."

ARE THEY QUALIFIED

If that is the state of affairs in England, what better things can one expect in India seeing the way things are being done? I for one would never question the personal sincerity of the individuals who are in charge of the Film Advisory Board. This is not the time to doubt anybody's sincerity. Everyone is serious with the one single aim that the war must be won. But the question that suggests itself is: Are the men at the top qualified for these jobs? In this connection the *"Spectator"* of London, ten months after the outbreak of the war, writes as follows:

"Officials who are efficient enough in the humdrum and day-to-day administration of an office have been drafted to posts needing an imaginative and creative ability outside their range. Some of these men are self-complacent, and unable to adjust themselves to the urgencies of war conditions; others so far misjudge their own intrinsic importance that they are unable to visualize themselves as cogwheels rather than as a whole machine. Between them they have effectively prevented "outsiders" that is, the experts called in to deal with the planning of film propaganda—from getting on with the job. Fortified by the mystical properties of civil service procedure, by magic phrases referring to "established branches" and "Treasury authority", *they have rendered sterile most of the efforts to plan our film propaganda on a far-reaching and comprehensive scale.* Against their pomposity, and their dexterity in the manipulation of the red-tape tradition, the experts from outside have found themselves impotent."

This is how the officials at the head of affairs in England inspite of their sincerity have bungled things. If this is the case in England, what guarantee have we in India, with the present officials in charge, that the money—the tax-payers' money—now being spent and intended to be spent during the year —will be fully utilized for winning the war?

A SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS

To summarise in short the foregoing criticism I arrive at the following conclusions:

(1) That even after suffering the method of nomination I consider that the personnel of the Board is incompetent to sit in judgment over the propaganda films. It is, therefore, necessary that a new personnel should be appointed forthwith.

(2) That the attendances at the meetings so far should provide an index to the Government of the sincerity and the active interest taken by several members and those who have chosen to remain absent through several meetings continuously should be asked to resign. This is not the time for accommodating slackers. We want men who will act and act furiously to keep pace with the emergency.

(3) That the present selection of subjects for production is entirely orthodox and suggestions should be invited from the public or from different institutions with regard to the films that would contribute to the war effort.

(4) That a definite declaration should be made by the Government that the appointment of Mr. Alexander Shaw will not be continued after the expiry of one year and that if the Department will still continue its activities the post will be given to a qualified Indian.

(5) That the present dictatorial method of doing things over and above the heads of the members of the Board should be forthwith discontinued and the merely advisory capacity in which the members are at present should be changed and greater responsibility should be given to them in view of the vital nature of their work.

(6) That if the post of the Office Manager at present occupied by Mr. Shivdasani is not a permanent fixture, steps should be taken to secure the services of a more qualified person for the job.

(7) That the future plans of the Board especially with regard to the production programme involving an expenditure of public money should be published in advance for the benefit of the tax-payers and criticisms invited thereon.

(8) That a special study should be made of the causes of the failure of such activities in England and steps should be taken to prevent the recurrence of the same results in our country.

(9) That the exact position with regard to the guarantee the British Ministry of Information about their taking up twenty films from the Film Advisory Board should be defined in at least one particular aspect viz. after the departure of Mr. Alexander Shaw from India.

Unless the Board is radically overhauled in a truly democratic spirit and as suggested above, I am afraid that all the activities of the Board will prove barren and result in a dead loss just as similar efforts of the Film Publicity Department of the Indian Railway Board sometime ago and recent activities of the British Ministry of Information have done.

Navyug's Second Slapstick Picture!

L. P. K. Gives Malwankar His Chance

Slapstick Entertainment For The Masses

After seeing "Lapandav" the maiden picture of this company and now this, one would hardly approve of the ideals which the producers seem to have set for themselves. While pictures like "Lagna Pahawe Karun" may appeal to the cruder and lighter senses of the masses and thus make a little money for the producers, it is hardly a work to brag about as Winayak, its director, has been doing recently with and without provocation.

If "L. P. K." is Winayak's idea of a comedy then it is, indeed, tragic. A slapstick that stinks of ridicule, pointedly projected at the Hindu institution of marriage, can hardly be welcome to the women of Maharashtra to whom marriage is still the only career of a life time. To paint the father of a bride (note Kidmide's actions) as almost a pimp who stoops to endorse the amorous frolics of his daughter and of his prospective son-in-law is a little farfetched for the average Maharashtrian mind to accept. While portraying the natural anxiety of a father for the future of his marriageable daughter why should dignity be thrown over board?

KHANDEKAR'S TRAGEDY

Khandekar's pretensions at comedy writing must be accepted with a pinch of salt. While he has utterly failed to create truly comic situations, his effort at witty dialogues is most pitiable. Comedy is certainly not a forte of this well-known writer and to ask him to create comedy for the screen is like taking a strange companion to bed.

The actual plot of the story is very transparent. Chimanrao, a good hearted, blundering Brahmin, is anxious to get his grown-up sister married. He starts on the husband-hunt for his sister. But before he can find a suitable match for his sister, he is himself landed into matrimony. After Chimanrao's wedding, the husband-hunt begins again. And after a long search the girl is at last married to a city worker. The city worker, guided by the prejudices of his own father, chooses to cut away from his wife for a time. But Chimanrao reconciles them in time for the story to end well.

The picture has hardly any screen story beyond Damuanna Malwankar, who is certainly not the story. Remove Malwankar and look at Khandekar and Winayak together, and L.P.K. will look a horrible skeleton in the family cupboard. The treatment of the subject is utterly unimaginative and impotent and one wonders how Winayak, of all people, could have allowed the screenplay writer to run amok.

LAGNA PAHAWE KARUN
(Marathi)

Producers: *Navayug Chitrapat*
Screen play:
Dialogues & Songs: *V. S. Khandekar*
Photography: *Pandurang Naik*
Music: *Dada Chandekar*
Recording: *Chavan*
Cast: *Damuanna Malwankar, Jog, Vasant, Damayanti and Shakuntala*

Released At: *West End Cinema*
Date of Release: *21st Dec. '40*

Direction: WINAYAK

With a screen play built so weakly, the direction can hardly be outstanding. Winayak seems to have taken the whole thing like a big fun and has done his job carelessly. After his brilliant effort in "Ardhangi" he has come down a lot in "L.P.K."

Damuanna Malwankar who makes "Lagna Pahawe Karun" a lively picture.

A STINKING CARCASS

Damuanna's performance, though aping Chaplin at places, is still very good and naturally becomes the main support of the whole show. After him come the charming Shakuntala and the steady Damayanti, both of whom have done pretty well. From the rest, none acts. And it is well, they don't.

The music in the picture is rather poor and so is the sound at places. The photography is however excellent, particularly the outdoor shots in the palm groves.

Well, "L.P.K." is a carcass of a comedy dressed in colourless clothes of slapstick and with a stink of social ridicule.

Winayak must apply himself to something better in future, if his brilliant career as a film director is ever to be applauded by a nation. Picture making is a precious opportunity which should be utilized in producing purposeful pictures and not frittered away in stupid gambols like "L.P.K." People expect it from Winayak who in addition to being an educated man is considered an intellectual by his fans. And is he not the pet pupil of Shantaram?

TRANSCRIBING

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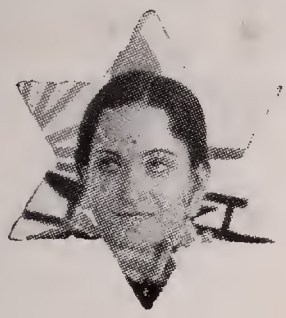

VANMALA

SHOBHANA SAMARTH

ASHA PICTURES'

HILARIOUS COMEDY HIT

Ghar Jawai

(ADOPTED SON-IN-LAW)

Producer:
H. V. MOTE

Direction:
KUMARSEN SAMARTH

Music:
ANNASAHEB MAINKAR

Screen Play:
ACHARYA ATRE

Starring:
SHOBHANA SAMARTH
VANMALA, AVINASH
MAHADEV KALE & DAMUANNA

WATCH FOR ITS RELEASE DATE

Atre Pictures Forthcoming Attractions

1. **Maha Kavi Kalidas**
2. **Panna Dasi** (in Hindi & Marathi)

Two Refreshing Hits

FROM THE

Facile Pen of Acharya Atre

BEING PRODUCED AT

Chitra Mandir

ATRE PICTURES'

MAIDEN SOCIAL HIT

Charano-ki-Dasi

(HINDI)

Payachi Dasi

(MARATHI)

—Brilliantly Blending Comedy & Pathos—

Screen Play:
ACHARYA ATRE

Direction:
GAJANAN JAGIRDAR

Music:
ANNASAHEB MAINKAR

Starring:
Durga Khote
VANMALA
JAGIRDAR
AVINASH
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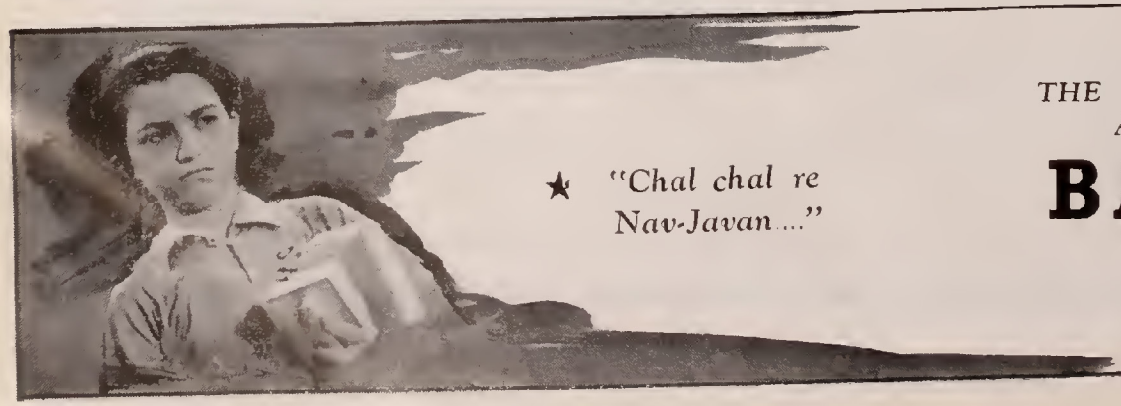

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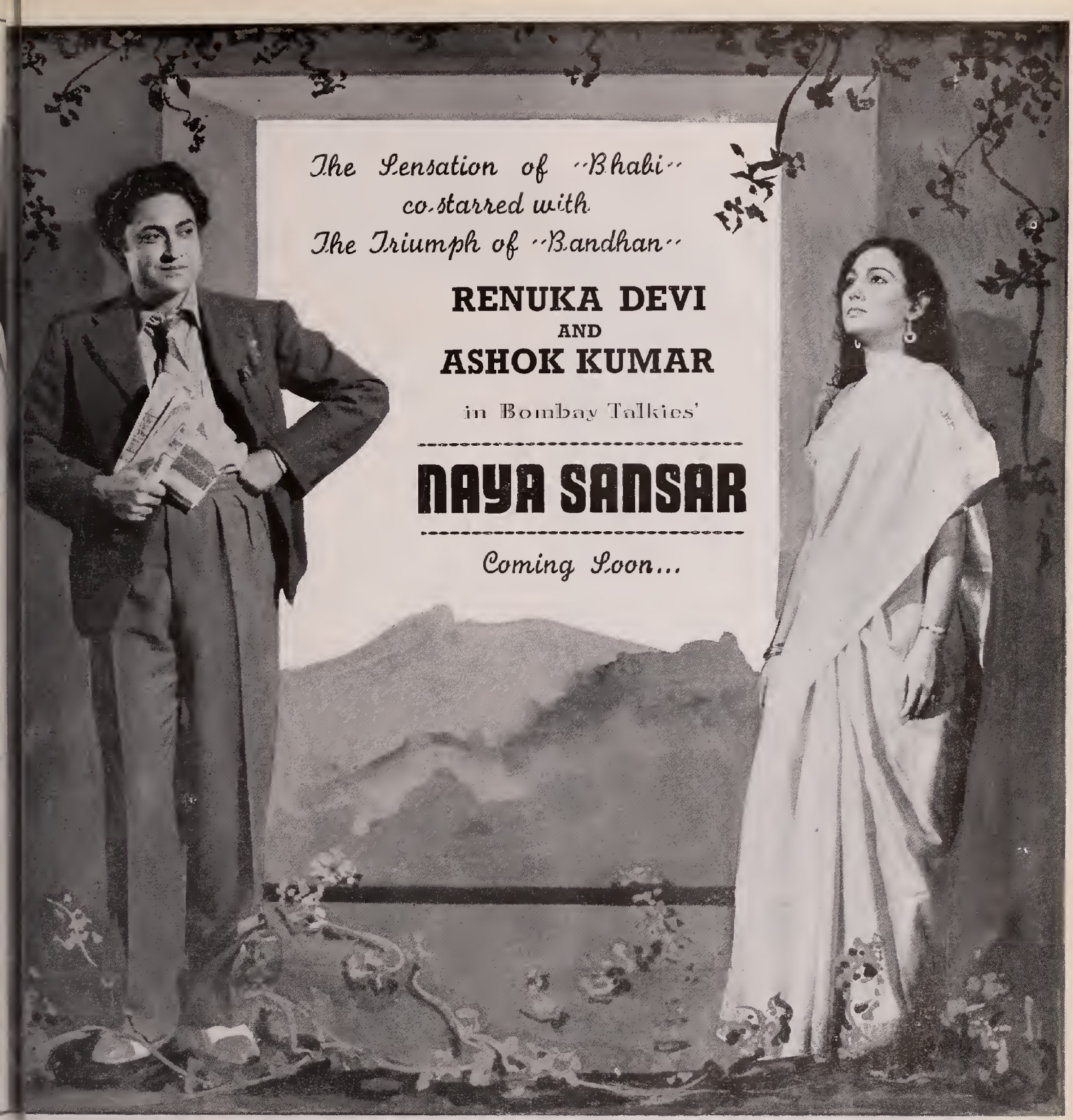
"JUBILEE PICTURE"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RENUKA DEVI
AND
ASHOK KUMAR
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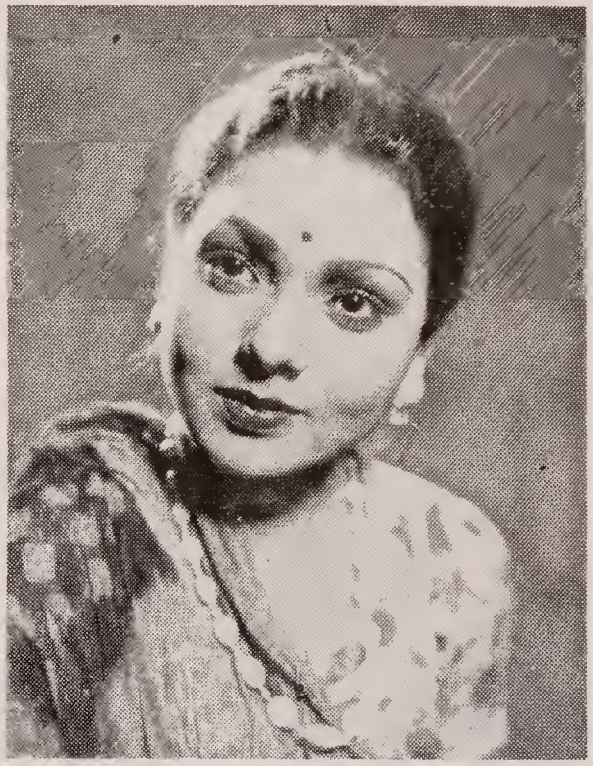

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★ PREM ADIB
★ BHUDO ADVANI
★ M. NAZIR, ★ MIRA DEVI
★ KAUSHALYA and others.

•

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The EDITOR'S MAIL

[In this section, the editor himself replies to queries from the readers. As thousands of letters are received every month—some anxious and several frivolous—it is neither possible nor convenient to attend to all. Selected letters are usually treated in an informative and humorous strain and no offence is meant to anyone.]

S. A. Gaffar (Calcutta)

Is Ashok Kumar, the Bombay Talkies' hero married or a bachelor?

Fortunately, Ashok is a married man.

R. L. Beharee (Vernlam, Natal)

Are there any more Indian colour pictures besides "Mother India?"

India has so far produced only two cinecolor pictures. The first was "Kisan Kanya", the second being "Mother India." After that the company that produced them—the Imperial Film Co., went into liquidation.

G. S. Padakone (Calcutta)

I want the private address of Mr. V. Shantaram of Prabhat?

I regret, I can't give the private address of Mr. Shantaram. It is reserved only for private purposes, but you can write to him, c/o Prabhat Film Co., Poona and he will get your letter.

J. Patil (Lahore)

Please tell me, all you know about Motilal?

All that I know about Motilal can't be told. Won't it be enough to know that he is one of our leading artistes and is now working in Ranjit pictures.

Mama Warerkar, a Maharashtian dramatist has criticised Prabhat's choice of "Omar Khayyam" and suggests their taking up "Meghdoot" instead?

Because Mama can himself write "Meghdoot" while "Omar Khayyam" can't be written on milk and water. You should really not take Mama seriously. No one does and if you do, Mama will be the first one to faint. Like "Meghdoot", he is also a messenger from the clouds.

A Rauf (Natal)

Why isn't kissing allowed on the Indian screen? Just when they are so near it, the artistes are separated and the audience is expected to imagine the rest.

Let me assure you that instead of seeing the Indian stars kissing clumsily, it is better to imagine the rest. And it is good that kissing is prevented otherwise there would be an epidemic of disease and even good boys like Prithviraj and Ashok Kumar would be affected for no fault of their own.

M. L. Ali Khan (Hyderabad)

I have heard that Mr. V. Shantaram, Prabhat's great director is a real star maker. If it is true I want to be tried by him?

Right! He makes them with his own hands. But he has not yet thought of the male stars.

K. K. Row (Masulipatam)

I want to dance with Leela Desai as I am an expert in dancing. Can you help me?

No, I can't. Apply to Mr. Chunilal Desai, Supreme Film Distributors, Main Road, Dadar, Bombay, and he can possibly arrange it. He is Leela's liaison officer for her dance tour.

I hear that Sunita Devi (once of Bombay Talkies) intends to establish an art centre at Bangalore?

I can assure you that it will be thrilling if Harin Chattopadhaya presides as the high priest.

H. Bahadur (Allahabad)

May I know to what community Miss Sitara belongs?

To the illustrious community of Eve. That is all I know and care for.

E. V. Dhan (Trivandrum)

Is Meenakshi in any way related to Mr. Winayak?

Not, in any way.

D. Patell (Poona)

From the December issue it appears that Prabha is your favourite star. I see six photographs of her in one issue. What do you like in her?

I like her producer Sardar Chandulal Shah and our publisher likes the big balance in the Sardar's bank. Photos in "filmindia" are a publicity item and have to be paid for. As an editor, I have nothing to do with them.

B. M. Setty (Raichur)

Is it not a great loss for Sohrab Mody to lose Naseem?

Probably in personal prestige but not as a producer. If Sohrab can run the show with Sheela and Nawal, he can certainly run it without Naseem.

Bhishma Singh (Pratapganj)

How would you rate the talents of the following persons in dialogue—writing:—Kashyap, Kedar Sharma, Pt. Indra, Betab, P. K. Atre?

Dialogue-writing is a difficult art and irrespective of what language they write in, I would rate the persons mentioned by you as follows: Betab, P. K. Atre, Kedar Sharma, Kashyap and Pt. Indra. But mind you, I have not taken into account the quality of the language in this rating. Their rating is arrived at merely from the view point of original thought which is a vital part of a dialogue and always more important than the words used to express.

S. Asghar Ali Wasti (New Delhi)

What is the real name of Charlie, the comedian and where does he come from?

Believe it or not, they called him Nur Mahomed Haji Ahmed when he was born. He hails from Porebunder and was probably packed to Bombay with the ghee that comes from there.

G. Veera Raghava Rao (Vizagapatam)

Please tell me all you know about Anis?

I know that she is the heroine of "Padosi" but that is not all. The rest I suspect but I don't yet know.

Ishwarlal and Khursheed build a house in "Shadi" a Ranjit picture.

That is how he looks at her nowadays. Winayak is a trifle more interested in Meenaxi as the heroine of his picture "Amrit". And, ofcourse, he is the hero.

Can our producers produce pictures of the "Frankenstein" type?

Yes, if some of them will themselves act.

Jaswant Singh (Agra)

Who is the producer of Bombay Talkies—Devika Rani or S. Mukherjee?

Both. Each of them is in charge of an independent unit. After "Bandhan", Mukherjee could be called a little more successful.

Why did Director Kardar leave the National Studios? Can you guess the cause?

There is not much to guess. I know it. He had a difference of opinion with the managing directors.

Did you ever visit Agra? Tell me, what you think of it?

Several times, for business. Barring the Taj and some archaelogical monuments. I think Agra is a very dirty city and you are robbed on one pre-

Nalini Jaywant and Kanhyalal in "Radhika" a National picture.

---

text or another in the hotels, at the shops and even at its show places. I know instances of visitors being relieved of their beddings and suitcases. In Bombay, people don't do things in such amateurish ways. They leave the bedding behind and pick the pockets.

K. D. Mathur (Jodhpur)

So often you write articles urging educated girls from good society to join the film industry. While on the other hand you write short stories vividly describing the bad practices in the film industry. How do you reconcile these two things?

It is the primary craving of a human being to build a home. In the life-time of a human being a home is built once and never twice. So all his activities, his work, his pursuits, his ambitions, his thoughts must contribute to make this home happy and peaceful. Even the film art has to become a willing hand-maid to make this home a place of peace and love.

When a woman leaves her home and family to become a film star, her one aim in life should be to bring back to her home greater comfort, greater happiness and greater glory. That is the only way success should be cashed on the counter of life. The stories of Sudha, Surekha and Sandhya which appeared in "filmindia" are intended to serve as lighthouses in the stormy waters of glamour and greed. They show to the mariner danger spots where the rocks are located and where life's craft can be wrecked. Light-houses have never scared away good mariners. Similarly these stories should not scare off really good girls. The stories have charted the stormy seas and pointed the correct way. It is for those who take the plunge to avoid the rocks, remembering all the while that art must contribute to make a home happy. For, in a life-time of struggles if a person has not built a home —what has he or she done?

To Adam paradise was home. To the good among his descendants, home is paradise.

Chandrika Pd. Verma (Bhagalpore)

Please let me know the whereabouts of Meera?

Last heard in "Pak Daman" a Stage Film Co. picture produced at the Minerva Studios. The future is not known.

Is there any magic in the name Baburao? I find all Baburaos. e.g., Baburao Pendharkar, Baburao Pai, Baburao Patel held in high esteem?

The magic of action. They are doing their bit to reach the goal they have set themselves. But what you consider "magic" is really the noise they make.

Which is the best picture of 1940?

Kumar and Maya once again come to screen in "Madhusudhan" a Circo picture.

In my opinion "Puja" produced by the National Studios and directed by A. R. Kardar.

What is the nationality of Padma Devi?

She is Indian but she belongs to Bengal, where she has now made her home. But the people of her province don't seem to be doing much for her. She was better off in Bombay where producers recognize real talent and exploit it.

Kartar Singh (Allahabad)

I have read in a weekly magazine that Naseem has left Circo and joined the Minerva Studio again?

Don't read these weekly papers. They do a lot of guesswork to fill up the pages. Besides, there is no chance of Naseem going out of Circo as long as Chandramohan is there to underline the advantages of a picture with him.

Jagdish C. Goel (Roorkee)

What is the address of Miss Anuradha who was once working in India Artists?

She is under the care of Mr. Rafique Guznavi and stays at Shivaji Park, Dadar, Bombay.

Mrs. D. S. Karmarkar (Nagpur)

How many times is "Bandhan" worth seeing? I have seen it 39 times already.

I have seen it only once and was more than pleased. You seem to be a difficult one to please.

Bhishma Singh (Bhagalpore)

What are the qualifications of a journalist and especially of Mr. Baburao Patel?

If a man writes something that sells, he is a good journalist. What and how he writes is not in dispute so long as he has a certain number of followers. What Baburao Patel writes is read by thousands every month, though many don't like doing so. Isn't that the best qualification?

Miss Shanta Moudgille (Agra)

Who is that sweet Miss Rita Carlyle whose photo appeared in the December issue? As she is a Miss and knowing you what you are, is she safe with you?

Quite, quite, my child. I have not yet cultivated the traditional practice of chumming up with the secretary. And Miss Carlyle is a very shrewd girl who likes her job and would like to keep it and not lose it on the lap of her boss as is done in several European offices. Like you, I also think that she is sweet and I don't forget to tell her so twice a day—in the morning and in the evening, which all of course keeps her as bright as her numerous dresses and she doesn't mind a little overwork. By the way, how do you happen to know "what I am"? Have we met before?
I want your home address.

Being punished? Imagine Ashok Kumar in that situation with Renuka Devi in "Naya Sansar" a social picture of Bombay Talkies.

"Gladhurst", Juhu, Bombay 25. And I don't open my wife's letters but she passes them on to me after reading.

P. D. Mathur (Benares)

Which is the most successful picture of 1940?

"Bandhan" produced by the Bombay Talkies is the biggest box-office success of the year. It is proving a gold mine to the producers.

K. D. Misra (Gaya)

Will you agree with me if I say that beauty of the star plays an important part in the popularity of a film?

Almost a vital part. If the story is effectively produced a beautiful star will take it to the extreme heights of popularity. But where have we the beauties? All that we are given are some Mongolian features which degrade the screen. And the pity is that, in the absence of the real stuff, I have to call some of them beautiful.

R. Buchi Veeriah (Secunderabad)

Is it true that Shanta Hublikar has married a rich old man and that she won't appear in films?

She has married a rich young man who is broad-minded enough to let her continue her screen career. You will see her in "Prabhat" a social picture of Tarun Pictures.

Anand Mohan Sinha (Kashi)

What is the name of the next social picture of Bombay Talkies and who are the principal players?

"Naya Sansar" is the name of the picture and it features Ashok Kumar and Renuka Devi.

Jogendra Nath Misra (Bhagalpur)

Who is the best singer among Surendra, Ashok Kumar and Harish?

I think Surendra is about the best.

I want to know the whereabouts of Kamlesh Kumari?

So do I.

B. S. HEGDE (Bombay)

Is it a fact that Devika Rani has ceased to act?

It's fiction.

Banwarilal Sigtia (Benares)

I am always advised by my elders not to see films. They say it is waste of time and money.

Don't worry about this advice of the elders. It is orthodox and reactionery. Our theatres are fast becoming good school rooms where the best social and cultural education will be soon available. Take those elders to see "Padosi" and ask them afterwards whether the picture was worth their time and money. And ten to one, they will go and see it again and perhaps again and again.

Akhauri B. Nath (Ranchi)

When will Mr. Chaturbhuj Doshi complete his "Adhuri Kahani"?

When Sardar Chandulal writes its last chapter.

J. D. Patil (Lahore)

Compare and contrast Directors Mehboob and Kardar in all respects.

Both are excellent directors and both are eminently successful. Each of them has developed an individuality of his own in his work.

As men, while Kardar smiles, Mehboob laughs. Where Kardar frowns, Mehboob shouts. While Kardar is sweet and subtle, Mehboob is blunt and honest. While Kardar acts, Mehboob lives. The two men are poles apart and between the two I would rather take a sincere hit on the back from Mehboob than a warm handshake from Kardar. It is difficult to take Kardar's temperature and no one in the industry has succeeded yet.

Mehboob is a product of the modern rough and tumble life while Kardar is a relic of the mediaeval times when courtiers said one thing and meant another. Remember that both are rather rare types.

L. D. Shirvastava (Rajnandgaon)

You denounce "Geeta" while "The Times of India" speaks highly of it. Please enlighten.

"The Times of India" probably wants you to pay the producers so that the producers can pay the Times' advertisement bills. "Filmindia" is essentially for the readers and its reviews are not influenced by the advertisements.

Sumati Gupte returns to the screen in "Thoratanchi Kamla" a Famous Arun picture.

MAZHARKHAN

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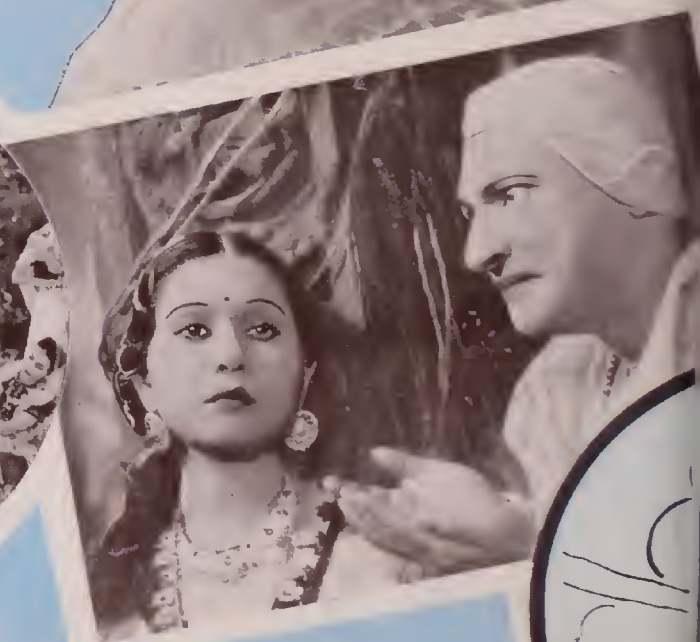

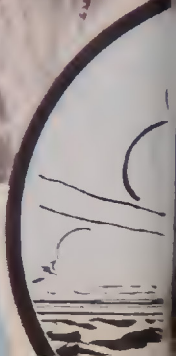

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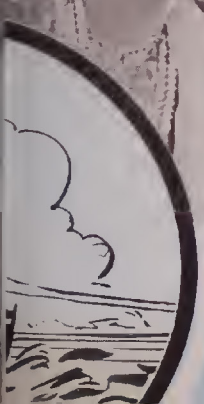

STORY:

MANMATHA RAY

SUMATI GUPTE—

After her work in Prabhat's "Dnyaneshwar,", Miss Gupte will be again seen in "Thoratanchi Kamla" a historical picture of Famous-Arun productions directed by Mr. Bhal G. Pendharkar.

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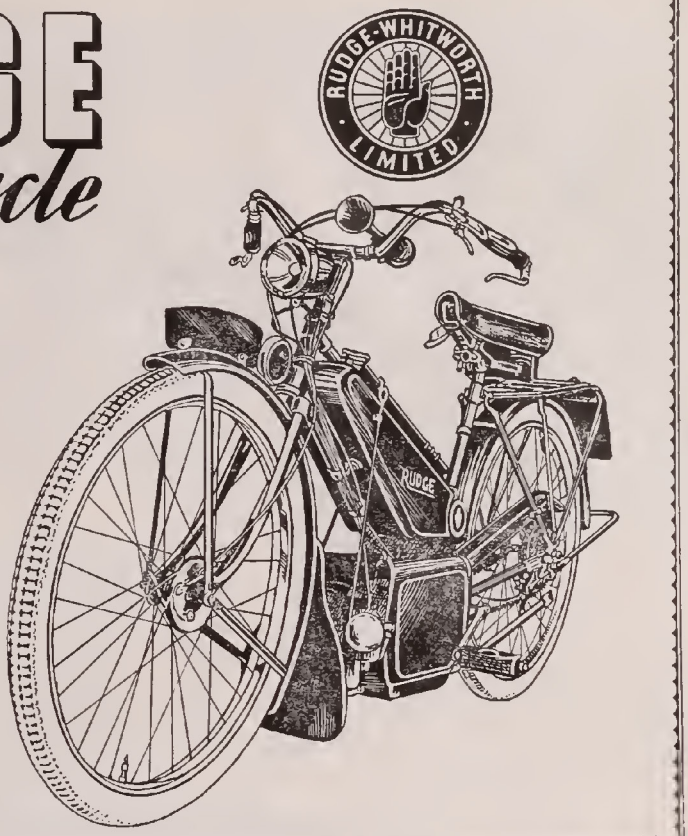

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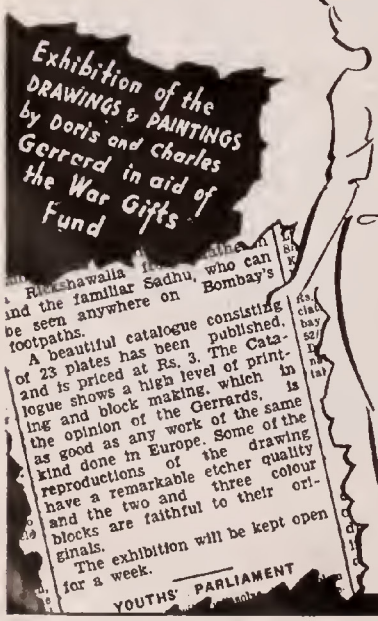
Exhibition of the DRAWINGS & PAINTINGS by Doris and Charles Gerrard in aid of the War Gifts Fund
Rukshawalla ... Sadhu, who can ... the familiar ... be seen anywhere on ... Bombay's footpaths.
A beautiful catalogue consisting of 23 plates has been published, and is priced at Rs. 3. The Catalogue shows a high level of printing and block making, which in the opinion of the Gerrards, is as good as any work of the same kind done in Europe. Some of the reproductions of the drawing have a remarkable etcher quality and the two and three colour blocks are faithful to their originals.
The exhibition will be kept open for a week.
YOUTHS' PARLIAMENT

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EXPRESS block

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BOMBAY.

OH! A MERE ACTRESS!

A Plea To Cast Off Hypocrisy

By: **Snehaprabha Pradhan**

In sheer candour few can beat Miss Snehaprabha Pradhan, the star of "Punar Milan". In this frank article she takes the society snobs to task and demands a better deal for the film actress.. The Editor.

So often when an actress passes them have I seen people pointing an accusing finger at her or heard them saying in a condemning tone "oh, a mere actress!" that I feel compelled to say a few words to these moral heroes and heroines of our society who will read this article of a "mere actress" as surely as they will go to attend the premiere of a picture where the "mere actors or actresses" are to be seen, or to crowd around them to get at least a glimpse of these Stars of the Silver Screen.

Daily in hundreds and thousands these people visit the cinema houses to be entertained by their favourite artistes, to cast off their blues, to forget the quarrels at home, to soothe the ache in their hearts, to substitute their tears of misery with smiles and laughter. Daily in thousands they go to bed feeling less miserable and more hopeful, less cynical and more optimistic. Daily they try to acquire the grace of some favourite star of theirs or to follow the fashion of the day by imitating Joan Crawford, Hedy Lamarr or our own Rose. And yet however painful it may be, it must be realised that when this very personality who is the cause of their smiles and hopes, faces them in life, in reality she becomes a "mere actress" worthy of contempt—an object which must be kept at a distance as one keeps a dangerous explosive.

How many of these society men and women who talk of the actor or actress with "a mere", to show their superiority of character, care to find out the number of hours of very hard work that she puts in, or the number of blazing lights she faces on the set, or the enormous mental strain that she experiences when from a laughter she changes to a heart-piercing cry? How many of these people, men and women, bother to know about the worries and heartbreaks that the film artiste carries with her—worries about her career which is so short-lived—heart-breaks because her best friends start condemning her?

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

I am talking from personal experience. Before I joined this line—

Mira in "Darshan" a Prakash picture.

as a matter of fact until the very day I signed my first contract—there was not a single "Society" a single college in Bombay that did not approach me with an invitation to attend some function or with a request to take some active part in the function. There was the Lucknow Students' Conference, the hundreds of charity performances at the C. J. Hall, the charity programme for the American school for the blind—this and that. There was never a single evening when I did not have one meeting or the other to attend—some debate or the other to occupy my spare time.

Snehaprabha Pradhan hits the snobs and how!

And yet after I joined this line, how many of these societies, how many of the students who swayed to the rhythm of my music and dances, when I was one of them, who applauded me for one witty thing or the other I said from the platform, who unanimously elected me as the secretary of one society or the other—ever cared to approach me with similar invitations? How many members of the societies which owe the collection of some thousands of rupees to the part I played in their charity programmes, will feel obliged to show recognition for now a "mere actress"? How many of these people who in my college days thought it a privilege to know me, now do not hesitate to get a sudden attack of loss of memory?

How many of the girls who now cluster around me when I sometimes go to pay a visit to my college and who suddenly find themselves so terribly attached to me as to feel justified in making a bold demand for passes of our picture, will dare to go about with me or will dare to be seen with me without feeling ill at ease and guilty? And is it not so because, according to them now I

Durgesh in "Pardesi" a Ranjit picture.

am a mere actress with whom they can now have no social intercourse as they had before? Is it not so because according to them the actress is supposed to have no morality, and because the laws of morality must be put before the laws of sincerity and humanity?

PENALTY OF CLASS

This is about one who comes from a high class family—whose parents and relations have been occupying high positions in the society. I wonder if I am not paying the penalty for belonging to such a high family because it seems this very fact has made my entrance into this profession a crime greater than a similar one committed by those who, unfortunately, have no parentage or position to boast about.

In short whether a film artiste comes from a good high-class family or she has the misfortune of belonging to a class of people which this very society of moral people maintains (secretly ofcourse) and to which class the society owes the safety of many of its daughters from the beastly passions of its own members—she becomes a mere actress to the very men and women who spend many an evening with her in the cinema theatre.

There is nothing that an actress is not accused of—"she drinks, she smokes, she goes to the races, she flirts, she seduces"—oh, so many things she does that hurt the staunch dictators of morality! Granting many of these things as true, one must not fail to see that many of the artistes do not acquire these habits AFTER coming in the line but they come in the line WITH them.

SOCIETY BUTTERFLIES

Truth forces me to say that some of the product of the high-class society, that has come into this profession, is seen indulging in these vices

Bibbo plays the lead in "Akela" a Great India picture.

more vehemently and passionately than the others. The point is that even after we grant that the actress does all that is bad, are all the men and women who overcrowd the bars at the Taj or the Green's, who forget every rule of dignity and good behaviour on the race-course at Mahalaxmi, who indulge in sensuous dances in the dimly-lighted dance-halls, who parade in the cinema houses in ultra fashionable dresses —the women with much of their backs and more of the fronts exposed, with over-rouged cheeks and thickly painted lips—are all these men and women actors and actresses?

Are not these men and women the members of the society that boasts of its high standard of morality and that boldly points an accusing finger at the cinema artistes? Do they not indulge in the same vices that the actress is accused of? What justification has then such a society to throw stones at the others who at least work hard and toil sincerely to provide entertainment to the millions?

What right has a society which has men in it who develop fat tummies as a sign of their prosperity, merely by throwing orders across the tables, or by playing a few cotton figures, and women who do nothing but eat, drink and dance, squandering their money on useless luxuries, without a stress of humanity in them—to cast a condemning look at the artiste who makes it possible for them to go home with lighter hearts? Or do vices become virtues when they are fondled and sheltered by the aristocrats of the society?

Please do not think I am trying to defend myself? Fortunately I do not smoke, drink or go to the race-course (though many will like to believe to the contrary). I do not know ball-room dancing. The Taj I have visited only once that too at the age of eight when I first came

Shivaji as portrayed in "Thoratanchi Kamla."

to Bombay. But I am not here to boast of these facts about myself nor to defend those from my line who enjoy the pleasures that the modern world presents them with. All that I want to say is that the film artiste does nothing that the men and women out side this profession do not do.

THE PAPERS MUST GIVE A FAIRER DEAL

The vices of its own members the society protects, while the vices of the film artiste it prints in bold type. It hides its own defects giving prominence to those of the others. It boasts of itself as the "Modern Society" on the strength of its vices and condemns the artiste for having the same. If an actress divorces her husband, the newspapers give headlines to the news, if she is seen on the race-course it is immediately broadcast, if she is ill they hasten to write an obituary, killing her before she is dead, if she insists upon calling a friend a friend, motives and meaning are attached to the friendship, sacrificing truth and decency for adding 'spice' to the contents of a paper; (How many magazines owe their existence to the spicy news that they print at the cost of the poor artistes, little caring for the hurt and bitterness the news must be causing to the victim?)

Sarojini in "Jadu-i-Bandhan" a Mohan picture.

And yet how cleverly are hidden the facts about the society men and women who under the security that marriage affords them, lead a free and gay life, who join this club or the other, sacrificing the sanctity of the home for the passionate pleasures of the fashionable world, who meet at Mussorie or Mahableshwar to spend the 'Holidays' and improve their health—not in the open air or in the company of Mother Nature but in the crowded dance halls of the hotels.

ARE MALE VICES COMPLIMENTARY

If I have written mainly about the actress and not so much about

An interesting situation from "Mere Raja," a Paramount picture.

the actor, it is because in this man-made world the vices in a man are taken as a compliment to his manhood. While a man can leave his wife even after twenty years of companionship with her to seek inspiration in another without much harming his social status or career, the women cannot do so even for the most justifiable reasons without losing the respect and love of the entire society. But even the poor actor suffers no less than his colleague—the actress.

How then an industry which consists of immoral men and women viz. the actors and actresses has

Indurani in "Allauddin Leila" a Mohan picture.

succeeded in occupying such a prominent and secure place in the industries of the world within such a short period so much so that to-day it has become a necessary feature of the modern world? Or are we to believe that the members of the highly moral society have the power to feed their souls on vices and yet remain unaffected by them?

I think it is high time that society decides to cast off all hypocrisy and to look at the profession of the film artiste as one more means of livelihood in this world of the unemployed. Especially when reason tells that the vices of the artiste are the vices of the men and women all over the world, it should get rid of the spirit of snobbery and if it must denounce and outcaste people for doing wrong things, let it denounce and outcaste its own members first.

And if it will still insist on talking of a film artiste as a "mere actress,,' then the artiste too when she meets a member outside her profession, will be justified in talking of him as a "mere member of *a hypocrite society.*"

For there are not a few of these snobs who will give ten years of their life to become mere actors or actresses, if only they could have the moral courage and the qualities to become so.

PADOSI

[IN HINDI]

Starring : MAZHARKHAN, GAJANAN JAGIRDAR, ANIS, BALWANTSINGH, *Mulia, Kashyap, Radhakisan, Vasant Thengdi, Lajavanti, Balakram, Sumitra, Gopal and Sarladevi.*

SHEJARI

[IN MARATHI]

Starring: **JAYASHREE, K. DATEY, G. JAGIRDAR, CHANDRAKANT.** *Gouri, Manajirao, Master Chhotu, Vasant Thengdi, Vatsala, Balakram, Sumitra, Gopal and Kamlabai.*

DEEP AND STRONG,

THEIR FRIENDSHIP MATCHED
WITH THE WATER-DAM
MAGNIFICENT
WHILE IT HELD!
MENACING WHEN
IT CRACKED!!

★ ★ ★

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Historical Hit

THORATANCHI KAMLA

(थो रा तां ची क म ला)

Featuring

SUMATI GUPTE

CHANDRAKANT, I. T. NIMBALKER,
NANASAHEB PHATAK, BAPURAO PAWAR

★

Written and Directed by

BHAL G. PENDHARKER

Produced at

Famous Arun Studios

★

Bookings With:

BOMBAY PICTURES CORPORATION
Ahmed Chambers, Lamington Road, BOMBAY-4.

FAMOUS FILMS'

DHARMAPATNI

in TELUGU

Written by: V. S. KHANDEKAR

is Running to Crowded Houses at 15 Theatres in Andhra Desha.

FAMOUS ARUN FILM Co.

Announce

1. Matrubhumi

(IN MARATHI)

2. Damaji

(IN HINDI & MARATHI)

3. Maharathi Karna

(IN HINDI, MARATHI & TELUGU)

Sunshine Smile of a Dark Room Man
Shiraz Ali Hakim's Colourful Career
From Obscurity To Popularity

If ever a man has smiled his way to success it is Shiraz Ali Hakim, the never-to-be-ruffled proprietor of the Famous Cine Laboratory. And his success is unique as the world around him participates in it and does not grudge it. Could success be more popular?

For, this success of Shiraz, as he is affectionately called by the young and the old (though some people insist on calling him Shiraz Seth to his utter embarrassment), does not intrude on anyone—not even on the smallest dependent among his numerous employees. Shiraz has neither "smashed" his way to success nor "grabbed" his opportunities and made the most of them. He has just worked day in day out patiently, quietly, unassumingly with the one ideal in view: "Live and Let Live."

And wedded to that winning smile of his, is the sweet voice made sweeter by the sincere, affectionate and unequivocal words. That voice, those words and that smile are given to you without asking and no price is ever asked for them.

That is in short Shiraz Ali Hakim, the 'hakim" of everyone's evil mood, the "hakim" of everyone's helplessness, the "hakim" of many a friend's misfortune. For, in this man of Maharashtra born in 1904 in the obscure village of Pawas in the District of Ratnagiri, there is that irresistible humanity which draws everyone towards him in a sincere handshake of friendship.

DIGNITY OF LABOUR

Like Mr. V. Shantaram, the greatest director of our film industry, Shiraz began his film career from the lowest rung of the ladder in the Maharashtra Film Company of Kolhapur.

In 1926, he was taken as a man of odd jobs and between acting and washing work in the laboratory, every humble job came his way with a salary that looked always more humble than the work. Those days were different when the film industry was in its real infancy and that great artist of Maharashtra, Mr. Baburao Painter was struggling to put it on a wider map. This great artist then needed men who would give their time for the sheer sake of their work forgetting that there was anything like monetary value in life.

It was here that the first seeds of the dignity of labour were sown in the design for living which became so natural with Shiraz in later life.

There is at least one man in our film industry, who has no enemies. His life must be rather boring but it is not so, as the world of friends, in which he lives, has become interesting enough for him. Mr. Shiraz Ali Hakim, India's pioneer laboratorian, is the proprietor of the Famous Cine Laboratory and is responsible for several production activities.

FROM ONE OPPORTUNITY TO ANOTHER

But those who are destined to rise above their station cannot be pushed down. In 1927, Shiraz came to Bombay and joined the Sharda Film Company, and began work in its laboratory. His hard work and perseverance pushed him into the Editing department where he worked for eight months.

Always on the look-out for improvement, he soon got a lucrative post in the Saurashtra Film Company of Rajkot. But other factors in this company compelled it to close down

(Con. on page 51)

Mr. D. B. Divekar, the Chief Laboratorian, has had a long experience and the necessary foreign training to guarantee every type of work and give it a technical excellence and efficiency.

A Film Romance

In The Mysterious Dark Rooms

Where Between The Red And The Green Lights Thrills And Kisses Take Shape.

Away from the star spangled glamour of film making, works a team of technicians whose job it is to guide the film on its hazardous journey from studio to screen. Follow us on this thrill packed trek through an unknown chapter of film life.

Conjure up in your mind a picture of the various stages of modern film production. Chances are that your mental pictures will be mostly confined to glamorous film stars, brilliantly lighted studios, mobile camera units, a host of studio attendants and make-up artists, burly directors and producers and also air-conditioned, acoustically corrected cinema theatres equipped with a battery of costly talkie projectors.

It is very probably that you will take a big jump over a very important stage of film making; and we do not blame you for it because not 2 per cent. of a cinema audience are aware of the tremendous amount of fascinating work that goes between "shooting" and "projection." Skilled technicians with long experience handle this highly specialized work of film processing. On their ability depends the technical excellence of the finished picture. Yet, their names never appear on the introductory title-pieces of the film you see.

Surely, you would like to know all about this interesting chapter in the romance of film....the stage of film making that transforms a blank strip of celluloid into a moving and talking picture packed with a bigger dose of drama than would be found in any human life. In this article we take you behind the scenes, as it were. at India's greatest film processing establishment—Famous Cine Laboratory.

So that you may better understand film processing technique, here is the principle of the Talking Picture briefly outlined for you:—Just like an ordinary camera the cine camera records the light image on the negative-raw film. A microphone is placed near the subject to pick

The Automatic Developing Cabinet, designed and built by the Famous Cine Laboratory, is used for the automatic processing of films at a fast speed.

India's Greatest Processing Plant—

Famous Cine Laboratory

up the sound. This microphone is connected to the Sound Camera in which a photo-electrical device transforms sound into a light image which is recorded on the raw film in the Sound Camera. The sound track on the film appears as a band of lines of varying area and densities. After being developed and fixed, the picture and the sound negative films are printed in synchronism on one positive film. When this film is screened in a cinema, a photo-electrical device in the projector retransforms the image of the sound track into the sound we hear through loud-speakers on the stage.

SCIENTIFIC PROCESSING

Having grasped the general principle of the modern Talkie, it is now easy to follow the interesting stages of processing, checking, editing, synchronising, printing and developing. Only the very modern processes are employed at Famous Cine Laboratory where all work is placed on a mechanically and scientifically controlled basis.

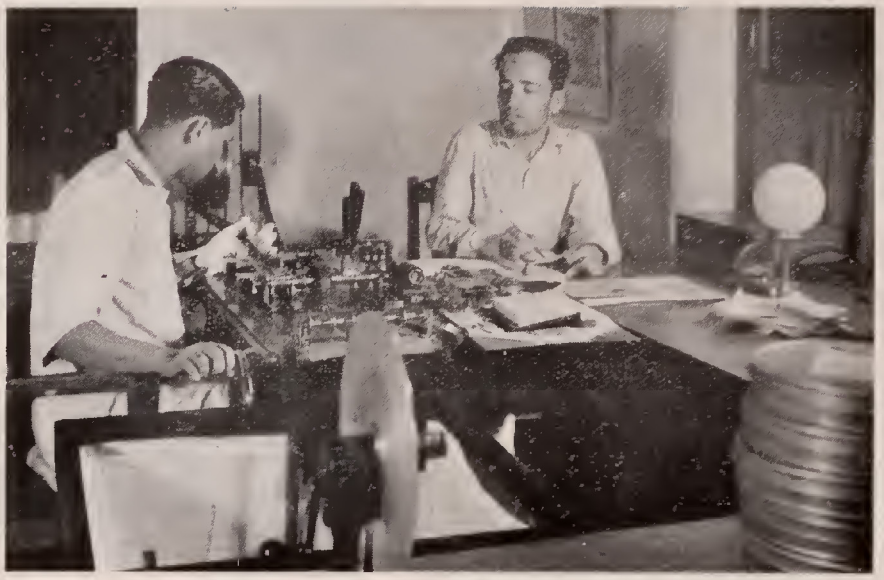
The picture and the sound negatives are developed in the latest type of Automatic Developing Plants in special temperature — controlled tanks with automatic feed and delivery arrangement. The daily output of Famous Cine Laboratory for Negative Processing is 12,000 feet; Sound 12,000 ft. and Positive Released Print 75,000 ft.

Coming out of the Developing Machine, the film is usually a length of meaningless, unconnected scenes. Many scenes may have been photographed repeatedly and introductory scenes may have been filmed long after scenes that should appear towards the conclusion of the picture. Therefore, the film has to be edited cut and spliced to form the complete story. These allied jobs are more complicated than would appear to the layman because indiscriminate cutting of the sound film would cause awkward breaks in speech or music.

Now the film passes into the hands of an experienced technician on whose keen judgment depends the uniformity of light density in the final picture.

A. K. Rashid, known to friends as "Moulana" for no fault of his own, is the Chief Contact man of the Famous Cine Laboratory. With a smiling resignation, he absorbs the inevitable shocks of the day's grim routine but with every smile a new order is knocked down.

They are all there—the Shiraz Family. A group photograph of the executives of the Famous Cine Laboratory.



Light Grading is an important feature of film processing. A good print—so necessary to avoid eye-strain—can only be had if the correct printing light is attained. But even this work is a utomatically done by this latest Light Grading Machine.

75,000 FEET PER DAY

All through the processes of editing, cutting, splicing and Light Grading, the film is handled with great care by experts who wear soft fabrik gloves. The edited film is automatically cleaned in a special apparatus. Incidentally, this automatic cleaning of the negative film is one of the many details of film processing which, if scamped, would produce films full of scratches and other annoying flaws. No wonder, then, films processed by Famous Cine Laboratory are invariably perfect.

After being developed, fixed, edited and cleaned, the sound track film and the picture film are printed on one positive film. The whole positive film is then developed, fixed washed and finally dried.

Another interesting feature of Film Printing is Control of Light Density.

In order to save the cinema audience from consequent eye strain Famous Cine Laboratory corrects these extreme density changes on its "De Brie" Printing Machine which automatically adjusts the intensity of the printing light so that the density variations in the final positive film are more or less imperceptible.

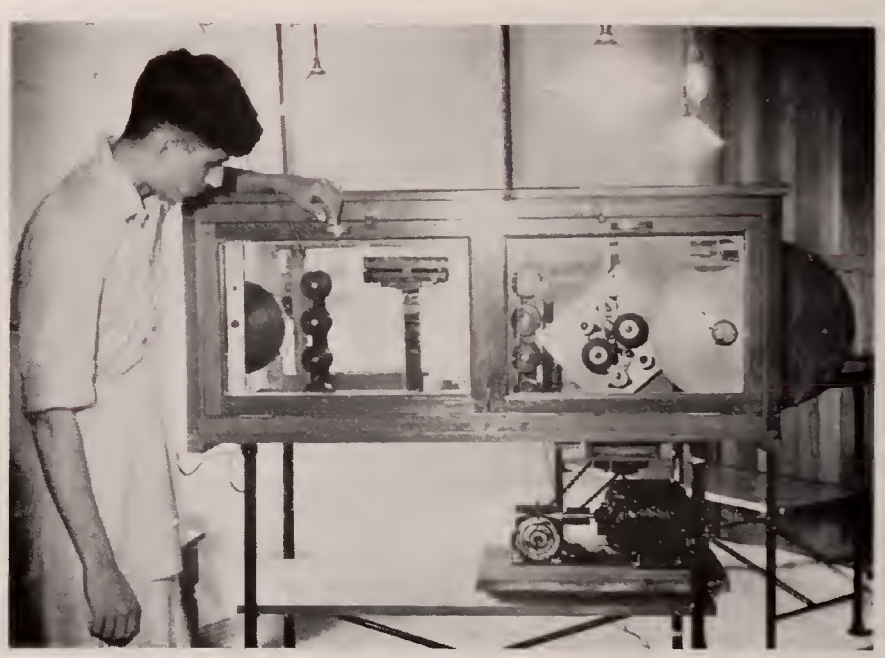
So efficient is the organisation and so up-to-date is the equipment at Famous Cine Laboratory that it is capable of executing daily an order for 75,000 feet of positive film ready for screening.

News Reel Work

With the present sequence of dramatic events in Europe, people in India are becoming impatiently hungry for news films. They want scenes from the battle fronts, scenes of war-torn countries ....and they want these vivid news shots commented on in the language they understand—their own language. Famous Cine Laboratory is meeting their demand admirably!

SPEAKING TO MILLIONS

Famous Cine Laboratory has now cleared the way to providing Indian picture houses with foreign news reels having a "sound" commentary in any vernacular language. At great expense this enterprising laboratory has created facilities for recording and super imposing vernacular commentaries on foreign news films e.g. 20th Century Fox. Already, Famous Cine Laboratory has successfully executed several orders and fresh orders are pouring in. Surely, Famous Cine Laboratory is the greatest enterprise in the Indian film industry because it has made history by putting foreign newsreels on the entertainment roll for India's millions.



Dust is a dangerous enemy of the silky film. Even a slight particle may ruin a good picture. But in this Dust-Proof Cabinet, the film is automatically cleaned and every superfluous flaw removed. Once again this machine is designed and built locally by the Famous Cine Laboratory.

Film Facts

1. The total length of film processed daily at Famous Cine Laboratory could easily encircle the Island of Bombay.

2. At the Laboratory they daily use 800 gallons of Hypo Solution for "fixing" the films.

3. The useful life of films processed at Famous Cine Laboratory is 40 per cent longer because every finished film is "waxed" on a special machine before it is released for distribution.

4. More than a hundred laboratory assistants are employed at Famous Cine Laboratory.

5. The Cameraman shoots over a thousand different scenes for an average film.

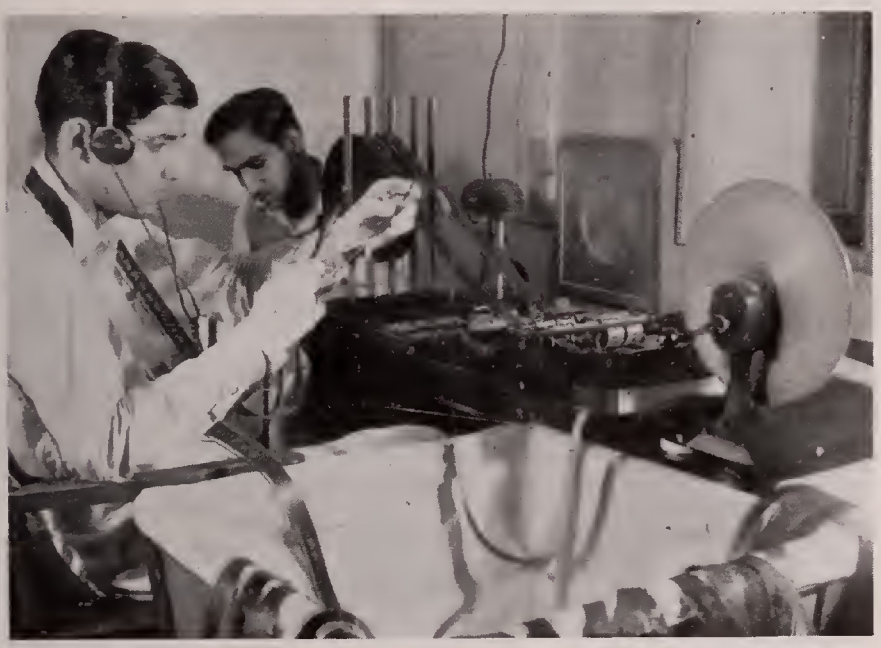
6. There are 36 distinct jobs performed in the transition of a film from camera to projector—all done by Famous Cine Laboratory.

7. Famous Cine Laboratory will soon be shifting into its own modern building with air-conditioned and dust-proof rooms and a small Theatre.

During the Silver Jubilee Exhibition held at the time of the Indian Motion Picture Congress, this impressive Exhibit of the Famous Cine Laboratory attracted a lot of attention. Here the visitors were explained the complete processing through which the film has to pass before coming to the screen.

Modern Machinery For Quality Work

Very few people outside or even in the film industry realise the vital part that is played by the film laboratory in the life of a motion picture. All that the layman cares to see and realise is what is presented before his eyes. If he finds it soothing he is satisfied by calling the effort as "happy photography." On the other hand if a picture on the screen strains the eye, the whole effort is condemned as "rotten photography." From the layman's point of view the result is summarised in the most precise manner and probably the most appropriate too but to the producer the difference between these two opinions is very vital, because, on the goodwill of the people, primarily created by their impression through the eyes, depends the future success or failure of his pictures.



A story is built in small bits and these bits have action that cannot be missed. This C. T. M. Editing Table is therefore a vital necessity for an up-to-date laboratory where every inch of film is carefully scrutinized, matched and joined to make the story complete.

It is here that the scientific method known as "processing" has its importance in the making of a motion picture. But processing, as is expected today with all its modern finish and efficiency, is not so easily achieved by one and all. Its inherent technical aspects have from the very beginning strictly limited the field of its specialists. While, therefore, we find numerous studios producing pictures, we find very few laboratories doing exclusive work of film processing. Another reason that has restricted this field of activity in the film industry is the exhorbi-

This Union Editing Table is another handy equipment for cutting and assembling the huge footage of film.

tant cost of the machinery and other equipment required to fit up an up-to-date film laboratory.

SOLITARY AND UNIQUE

However, after years of patient work and perseverance the Famous Cine Laboratory has been able to offer to the Indian film industry the best processing equipment in vogue today and with it guarantee excellence of quality not only to the producers but to the picturegoer in general. Only a few years back processing in India was done on a very primitive scale and crude methods of manual work were practised from end to end of the film. The result was that inspite of the greatest care taken in handling a film it did ultimately come out with a number of scratches and the inevitable dots and dashes that we so often used to find on the silver screen.

Since the introduction of machinery in the method of processing, the problem of touching a film with human fingers has been practically eliminated and now we see pictures having that silky finish which is always the dream of every ambitious producer. With the progress of the Indian film industry the demand for a greater output increased and it became necessary for the Famous Cine Laboratory to install equipment which would automatically turn out a huge amount of work.

Today the Famous Cine Laboratory, which is easily the largest processing plant in the country, is so completely equipped that it can meet all the demands and little more of the entire production activities in the country at present. It is quietly admitted that it is very difficult for an individual producer to equip a laboratory in the most modern way as the very cost of doing so proves economically unsuitable.

But this has become practically easy for the Famous Cine Laboratory with the work of over fifty producers in the country going regularly to them from month to month.

"The Moviola" another editing equipment so useful in a modern laboratory. Note the loudspeaker which reproduces the sound while the picture is seen through the view finder.

(*Con. from page 45*)

sooner than was expected and his friends in Bombay were glad to see Shiraz once again established in the Atmanand Film Laboratory.

The next step in the evolution of success was the establishment of the Standard Film Laboratory which Shiraz started as his own independent business venture. His charming personality and suave manners soon secured a reliable list of patrons and an untiring band of honest workers.

Those men, all of them, who started roughing it with him then are still with him, happier in life and stabilised for the future.

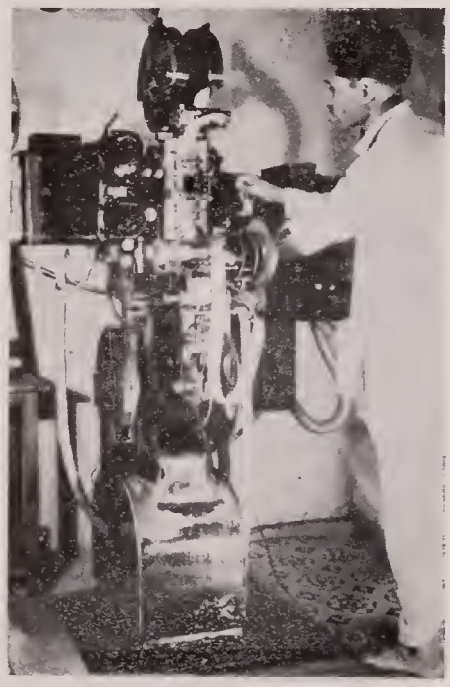
PROGRESSIVE FUTURE

Shiraz's urge for progress can hardly be called an ambition, as the word "ambition" is aggressive in its import. And aggression and Shiraz are antonyms. And yet a step further was due and had to be taken to fulfil the destiny in waiting.

In 1933, with the help and active co-operation of the late Mr. Abdulla Fazalbhoy, the Famous Cine Laboratory was opened with the latest available equipment.

Shiraz's association with the late Mr. Abdulla Fazalbhoy has been the happiest event in his colourful career of business as the patronage conceded by the late Mr. Fazalbhoy is still being extended to Shiraz by his enterprising sons with the same affection and warmth.

The intense mutual respect which this association enjoyed found its immediate expression in the establishment of the General Films Ltd. for production of films. Shiraz now took active part in the production of pictures and very soon under his personal supervision were produced outstanding hits like



Here is a machine that thinks. It is the world famous Debrie Automatic Printer. The image on the negative is printed on the positive with the help of this equipment and the utmost accuracy is needed for it.

"Chandra Rao More", "Baghban" and 'Industrial India."

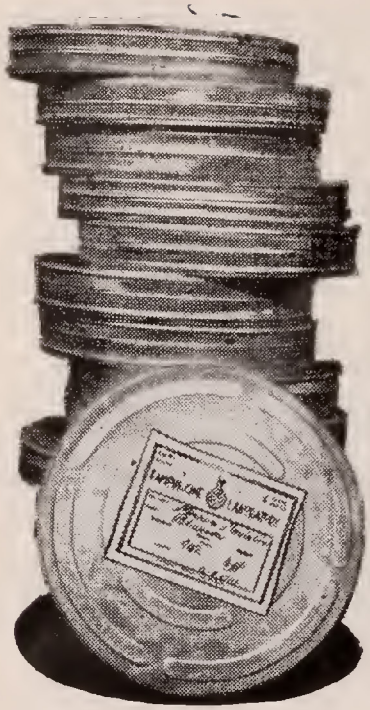
Southward Bound

Of a man blessed with luck, provincial limitations hardly hold up the progress. Same was true of Shiraz. Within a few months, his name appeared on the Boards of Directors of at least two South Indian producing companies.

Very soon Shiraz realised the possibilities of Telugu and Tamil films in the South and floated the Famous Films in 1938 at Nellore. His very first picture "Balaji" in Telugu proved a tremendous box-office success beating all previous collections at the ticket windows.

Encouraged by this success Shiraz soon established a new company called the Famous Films, Bombay and produced "Dharma Patni" in Telugu. Once again he has hit the high with this film which is proving a roaring success all over the South. This new company has now under production another one in Tamil called "Prem-Bandhan."

Making the world a big home of friends, it was easy for a man of Shiraz's temperament to secure reliable lieutenants in every field of his activity. Never before in the film industry had a single man so many friends who often went out of their way in exerting themselves to earn Shiraz's personal respect. With the help of these men, Shiraz soon established a distributing company called the Famous Film Circuit at Nellore. This institution is mainly intended to distribute films produced by Shiraz's own production units.



The Finished Article, 14 Reels, the average length of an Indian Picture, packed in 'Humidor' Cans, ready for despatch to the Producers.

A Friend In Need

Mr. Bhal G. Pendharkar, the crack director of Maharashtra, has been one of the oldest friends of Shiraz. It is therefore in season that these two old friends should associate and join in a mutual business. This association is known as the Famous Arun Pictures with studios situate at Poona. The first Marathi production which will come out of this studio is known as "Thoratanchi Kamla."

Still one more concern has the Shiraz stamp on it. It is called the Bombay Pictures Corporation and is mainly intended to distribute pictures produced by Famous Films, Bombay and Famous Arun Studios. One of the most ambitious subjects that will be taken for production shortly is 'Taj Mahal."

HE HAS NOT FINISHED YET

Wait a bit, don't be disheartened. The tale of this man of multiple activities is not over yet. It can never end, for that matter, as everyday he is adding new chapters to his life-story.

A man of Shiraz's energy is an indispensable factor in our effort to win the war. So Shiraz quietly opens a new department for short features and more quietly produces two war shorts "Making Money" and "India Arms For Victory."

Not content with this, he has started a new "16 m.m. department" for the now popular educational film and has already built a Reducing Plant for the reduction of 35 m.m. films to 16 m.m. ones.

Yes, Shiraz is a go-getter but but not an aggressive one. He is a pacifist by nature and his only aggression is his own hard work which does not intrude on others. He is courteous to a fault and many a friend looks upto him for help in his time of need.

And this help is given without a murmer and the million-dollar smile goes with it free of cost.

That is Shiraz Ali Hakim, the healer of his own fate and of his friends' misfortunes. Find us another man like that.

Still another new studio in construction at Poona at the Famous Arun Studio. Perhaps the popularity of the proprietor is increasing the demand every day from independent producers in the country.

• Pictures In Making - -

FAMOUS ARUN PICTURES (Poona).

"Thoratanchi Kamla" a historical picture of the times of Shivaji has now been completed by Mr. Bhal Pendharkar and is awaiting release at a suitable theatre.

It is said that Mr. Shiraz Ali Hakim the financing partner of this concern will soon start a mighty historical photoplay called "Taj Mahal" at the Famous Arun Studios.

FAMOUS FILMS (Nellore)

At fifteen important centres in the South "Dharma Patni" the second Telugu picture of this company is making new box-office records. Though the picture was delayed in the release nevertheless it is so well appreciated that people would have even liked to wait a little longer.

The company is now producing "Prem Bandhan" a social story in Tamil. The latest reports of production show that nearly three-fourths of the picture has been completed.

PRABHAT FILM CO. (Poona)

"Padosi" is making its own records at the Central in Bombay.

At the studios in Poona "Sant Sakhu" a socio-religious subject has gone into shooting with Hansa Wadker in the stellar role. Messrs. Damle and Fatehlal are quite satisfied with the screen tests of this artiste and they hope to make Mrs. Wadker a popular star in "Sant Sakhu."

The story of "Omar Khayyam" has been completed and the script has been finally handed over to Mr. Shantaram for further preparations. Settings are now being designed for this greatest of costume plays in which Shantaram is expected to excel himself.

BOMBAY TALKIES

Sometime in the second week of next month will be released the next social picture of Bombay Talkies called "Naya Sansar". The story of this picture has been written by K. Ahmad Abbas of *Bombay Chronicle* and naturally has a realistic background of the newspaper world. The cast includes well-known stars like Renuka Devi, Ashok Kumar and V. H. Desai.

Vanmala and Shobhana Samarth come together in "Ghar Jawai" the maiden production, of Chitra Mandir.

RANJIT MOVIETONE

By the time this is in your hands "Pardesi" a social picture directed by Chaturbhuj Doshi will be on the screen at the Lamington Talkies.

"Ummid" another social comedy directed by Manibhai Vyas is expected to succeed "Raj Nartaki" at the Royal Opera House.

At the studios director Chaturbhuj is busy on "Susral" still another comedy with Madhuri and Motilal leading the cast.

Director Jayant Desai is now giving finishing touches to "Shadi" with Motilal leading.

NATIONAL STUDIOS

"Pooja" directed by A. R. Kardar proved a little too heavy to be popular at the Pathe in Bombay. Very soon this picture will be removed and "Radhika" a costume fantasy of dance and music directed by Virendra Desai will take the screen at the Pathe.

At the studios a number of pictures are under production, the principal being "Asra" directed by Lalit Chandra Mehta and Chimankant, "Amar ki Bina" by director Mehboob and "Kasoti" by director Ramchandra Thakur.

WADIA MOVIETONE

"Raj Nartaki" in Hindi version was released with a big trumpeting at the Royal Opera House in Bombay. It is drawing good crowds at present and the studios expect it to be well received all over.

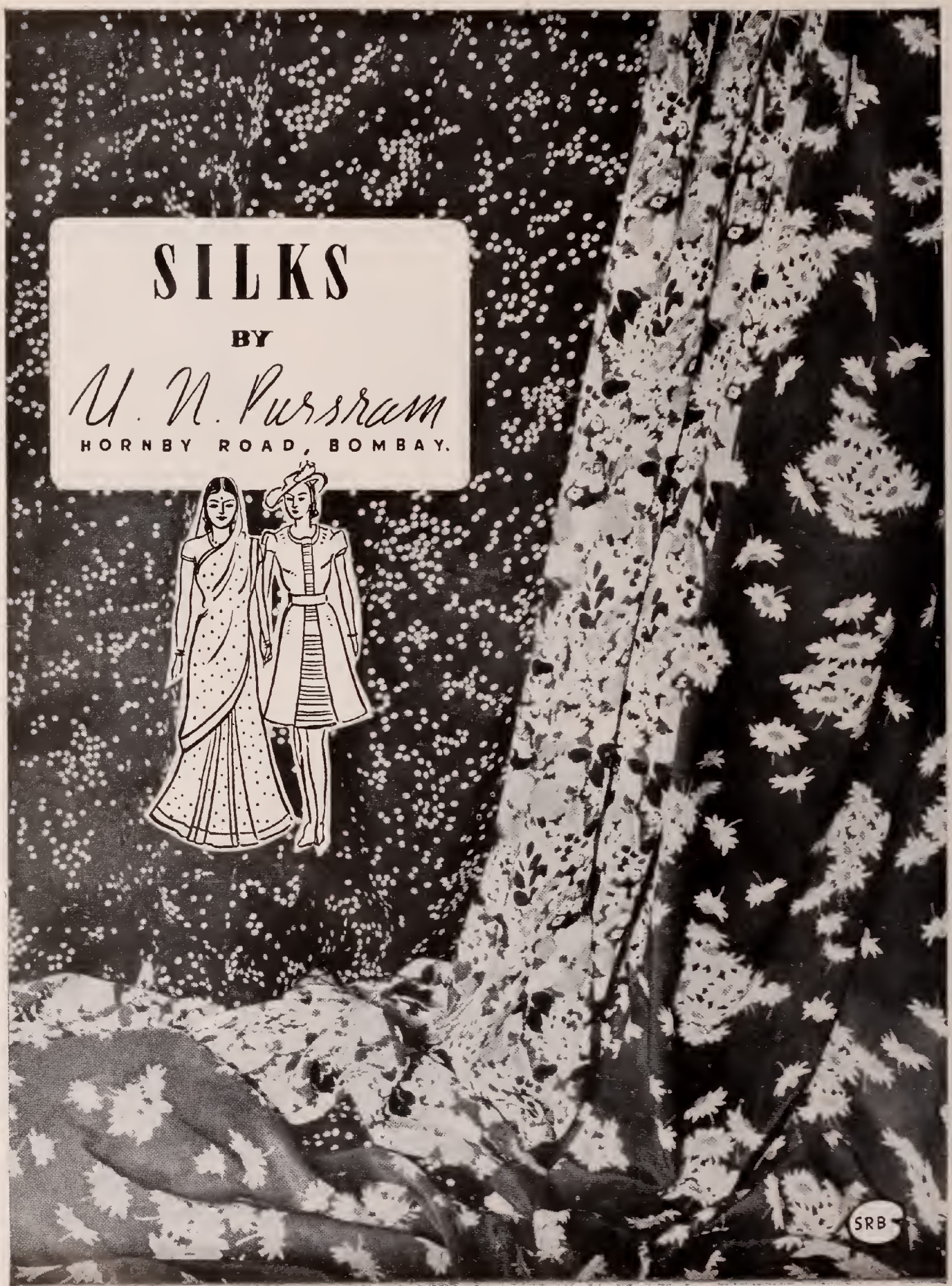
At the studios "Manthan" has been completed by director Ramjibhai with Radha Rani in the main role.

Director Homi Wadia is already busy with his new thriller called "Bombaiwali" while a lot of preliminary work has already been done on "Lanka-ki-Ladi".

NAVYUG CHITRAPAT

"Lagna Pahave Karoon" the comedy in Marathi was well received at the West End Cinema in

(Contd. on page 59)


SILKS
BY
U. N. Pursram
HORNBY ROAD, BOMBAY.
SRB

RENUKA DEVI—
After a long time this popular artiste who became a star overnight in "Bhabi" returns to the screen in "Naya Sansar," a social picture of the Bombay Talkies.

"THREE CHEERS"
TO THESE TWO—
!

'CHIMANRAO' and **'GUNDYABHAU'**
(DAMUANNA MALWANKAR and JOG)
- WHO ARE THE RAGE OF COMEDY-LOVERS—

MEET THEM IN

Lagna Pahawe Karoon

(HUNT FOR A HUSBAND)
NAVYUG'S SOCIAL COMEDY HIT

Directed by
WINAYAK

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NEW WEST END Bombay
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2 GEMS
by
WINAYAK

Not two communities. but two classes caught in the whirl of Strife and Disunity!

The story of their conflict and concord brought to Screen in

"AMRIT"

NAVYUG'S SOCIAL PHOTO PLAY

Directed by
W I N A Y A K

STORY:
V. S. Khandekar

Photography:
Pandurang Naik

Starring :- **Meenaxee, Lalita Pawar, Baby Devi, Baburao Pendharkar, Salvi, D a m u a n n a M a l w a n k a r, Master Vithal, Javdekar & WINAYAK.**

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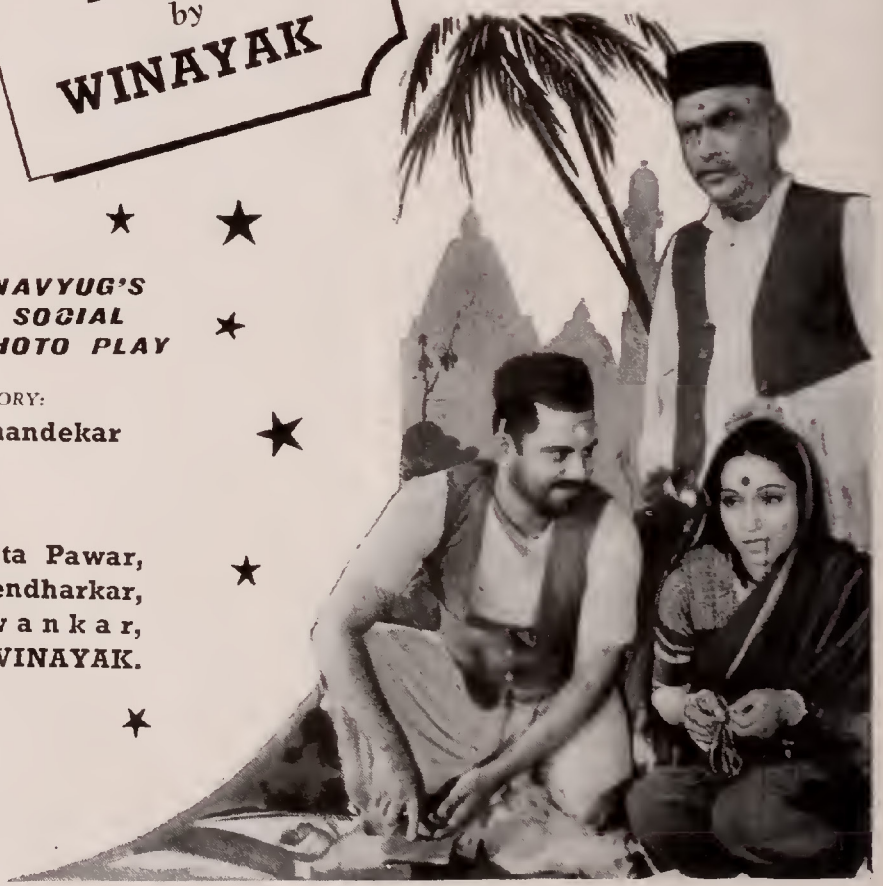


OUR REVIEW

Devika Rani Disappoints!

"Punar Milan"—A Goody-goody Picture

Snehaprabha Gives Outstanding Performance

This picture of Bombay Talkies hardly adds to their reputation as producers of outstanding hits like "Acchut Kanya", "Kangan" and "Bandhan." In comparison, this is a poor picture—poor in conception, poor in development and poor in presentation. However, the excellent reputation of the producers is making it a box-office success and that is important to an industrially-minded company like the Bombay Talkies.

The story is built on a crime. The crime of a drunken man at the birthday celebration of his son becomes the key-stone of the whole plot. In an argument. the old father kills a guest. The son takes the guilt on himself and runs away from home to save his father. The father is shocked and paralysed. He becomes speechless.

The son goes to the city and struggles and starves till he gets shelter from a street dancer. The street dancer falls in love with him and continues to earn for the boy. Then the old father of the boy comes to the city for medical treatment with the sister of the hero.

By a too familiar cinematic coincidence the sister comes across the street dancer. Then follows some usual villain-cum - heroine - plus-hero-cum-side-heroine sequences which end in the hero being arrested by the police. Now the father gets his tongue back and confesses his guilt. And having lived so long for that, he dies satisfied with the thought that his son is going to, after all, marry a street dancer.

DEVIKA RANI DISAPPOINTS!

That is the story in short which Devika Rani, Sarandindu Bannerjee, Gyan Mukherjee and Amiya Chakrabarty, set out to tell and have told us in the most unenterprising way possible.

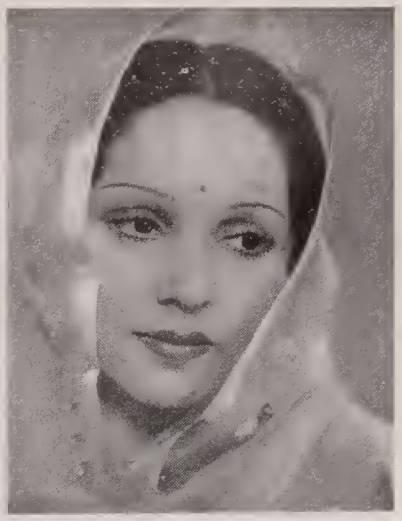
Every one had expected the first screen presentation of Devika Rani, as a producer, to be something more intellectual, more polished in presentation and more enterprising than "Punar Milan." Every one had thought that in the close association of her great husband, Devika had learnt the invaluable secret of producing the usual slick and chic pictures in which Bombay Talkies are known as pioneers. But alas, Devika, the beautiful and incomparable Devika, has rudely disappointed all her followers. In her very first essay as a producer, she has badly let us all down. This purposely pointed criticism is in the general interest of the company which a great man founded and for which that man gave his life. Let Devika learn a little more before she takes up another assignment, remembering that an institution is greater than an individual.

PUNAR MILAN

Released By. *Bombay Talkies Ltd.*
Story: *Saradindu Bannerjee*
Scenario: *Chakrabarty & G. Mukherjee*
Photography: *R. D. Pareenja*
Recording: *M. I. Dharamsey*
Music: *Ramchandra Pal*
Dialogues: *J. S. Casshyap*
Cast: *Snehaprabha, Kishore Sahu, Shah Nawaz, Anjali Devi Etc.*
Released At: *Majestic Cinema*
Date of Release: *21st Dec. '40*
Direction: S. H. N. NAQVI

EXCELLENT RECORDING

Coming to the picture, it has the usual good music which distinguishes the Bombay Talkies. But this time the dance and the music play their parts independently of the story and do not add to the interest



Devika Rani—now a producer must learn a little more before she takes another assignment.

of the subject. By themselves they are entertaining but they don't in any way push the story forward. The technique of story development looks therefore ten years old and makes several sequences boring.

Photography is good in parts. If the cameraman had taken a little more pains in balancing his light in the outdoors, the result would have been more in keeping with the previous traditions of the studio.

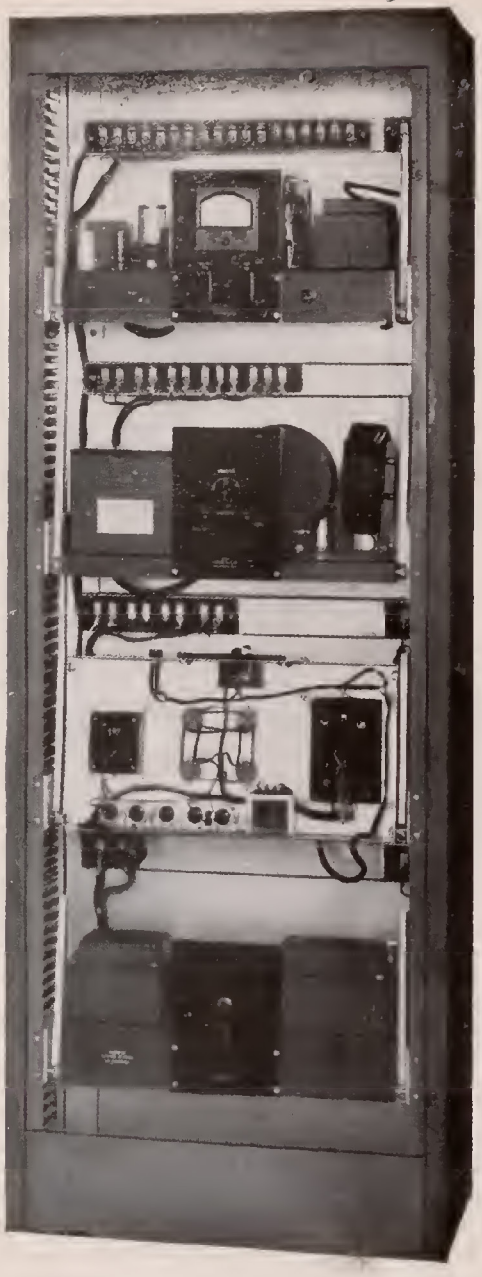
The sound recording is excellent and unusually so when one finds the thin voice of Snehaprabha effectively recorded.

A STAR IS BORN

Snehaprabha gives a beautiful performance. And she looks also quite attractive, thanks to the Bombay Talkies. Taking the burden of the whole story on herself, this talented little lady of the screen, acquits her responsibility with remarkable confidence and wins the admiration and applause of all. Here is a star, if a producer wants one. She is bound to reach great heights if her talents are suitably exploited. She sings, dances and acts and all this she does remarkably well.

In striking contrast with his talented wife, Kishore Sahu gives a very insipid and impotent portrayal of a very easy and simple role. Moving like a cold dumb-bell, he strikes chill into the very bones of the au-

(*Con. on page 59*)



LANSING "METROPOLITAN" Amplifier Cabinet opened, showing from top to bottom: (1) The "METROPOLITAN" Amplifier; (2) Two-way speaker Dividing Network, with single stage monitor amplifier, Monitor volume control and Test and emergency switches for stage speaker; (3) Speaker Field Supply, shown turned over on its exclusive Lansing "Tramvue" mounting to facilitate testing and inspection; (4) The Copper Sulphide Rectifier type exciter supply.

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(Contd. from page 53)

Bombay especially by the student class.

At the studio in Kolhapur they are shooting the final sequences of "Amrit" and director Vinayak hopes to put this one on the screen sometime in the month of March. With Baburao Pendharkar, Meenaxi and Vinayak, himself, playing important roles this picture is expected to prove a good box office success.

CIRCO PRODUCTIONS

By the time this is in your hands "Madhusudan" a social subject with Kumar and Maya Bannerji in the lead will be released at the Imperial Cinema in Bombay.

At the studios director Gunjal is fast progressing with "Tulsi" another social drama, while director Kardar has already started shooting "Swami" with Sitara and Radharani in the lead.

Other pictures in making are "Cleopatra", with Chandra Mohan and Naseem, under the direction of Khosla, "Vanmala" with Maya Bannerji in the lead under the direction of Mohan Sinha and "Mahatma Vidur" with Vishnupant Pagnis in the lead and directed by Mr. Gunjal. And at the top of all this, Bengal's great director Debki Bose is very soon expected to start his new picture called "Home Calls."

MOHAN PICTURES

The studios have three pictures under production at present namely "Shahzadi" under the direction of J. P. Advani, "Bulbule Baghdad" under the direction of K. Amarnath and "Chokha Mela" in Marathi directed by Messrs. D. K. Kale and Raja Pandit.

Two more pictures are planned to go on the sets in the beginning of next month, one under the direction of Nanubhoy Vakil and the other in charge of A. M. Khan.

PRAKASH PICTURES

"Mala" was released at the Imperial Cinema and the producers report that it was well received.

At the studios in Andheri the final sequences of "Darshan" a social story have been taken with Jyoti and Prem Adib in the lead. Another picture, this time a mythological one called "Bharat Milap" is expected to go into shooting very shortly under the direction of Mr. Vijay Bhatt.

PARAMOUNT FILM CO.

"Mere Raja" which was released at the Super Cinema in Bombay was well appreciated by the masses.

At the studios Mr. Pessi Karani is giving the finishing touches to his social story "Akela" featuring Mazhar Khan and Bibbo.

TARUN PICTURES

The present social picture under production called "Prabhat" and starring Shanta Hublikar is now nearing completion. It is expected to be on the screen sometime in the month of April and the producers entertain high hopes of its success.

ATRE PICTURES

Producer Atre is busy with "Charano-ki-Dasi" under the direction of Gajanan Jagirdar. The cast of the picture is rather improving as it includes Durga Khote, Vanamala and Jagirdar. The picture which is being produced in two languages, Hindi and Marathi will be the first independent venture of Mr. Atre and everyone, who has followed the career of this literary man, wishes it well.

(Con. from page 57)

dience. His performance is a big slide-down in comparison with his work in "Bahurani."

Anjali Devi is quite an attractive personality and gives quite a sweet performance as the sister of the hero. She has a future in our films.

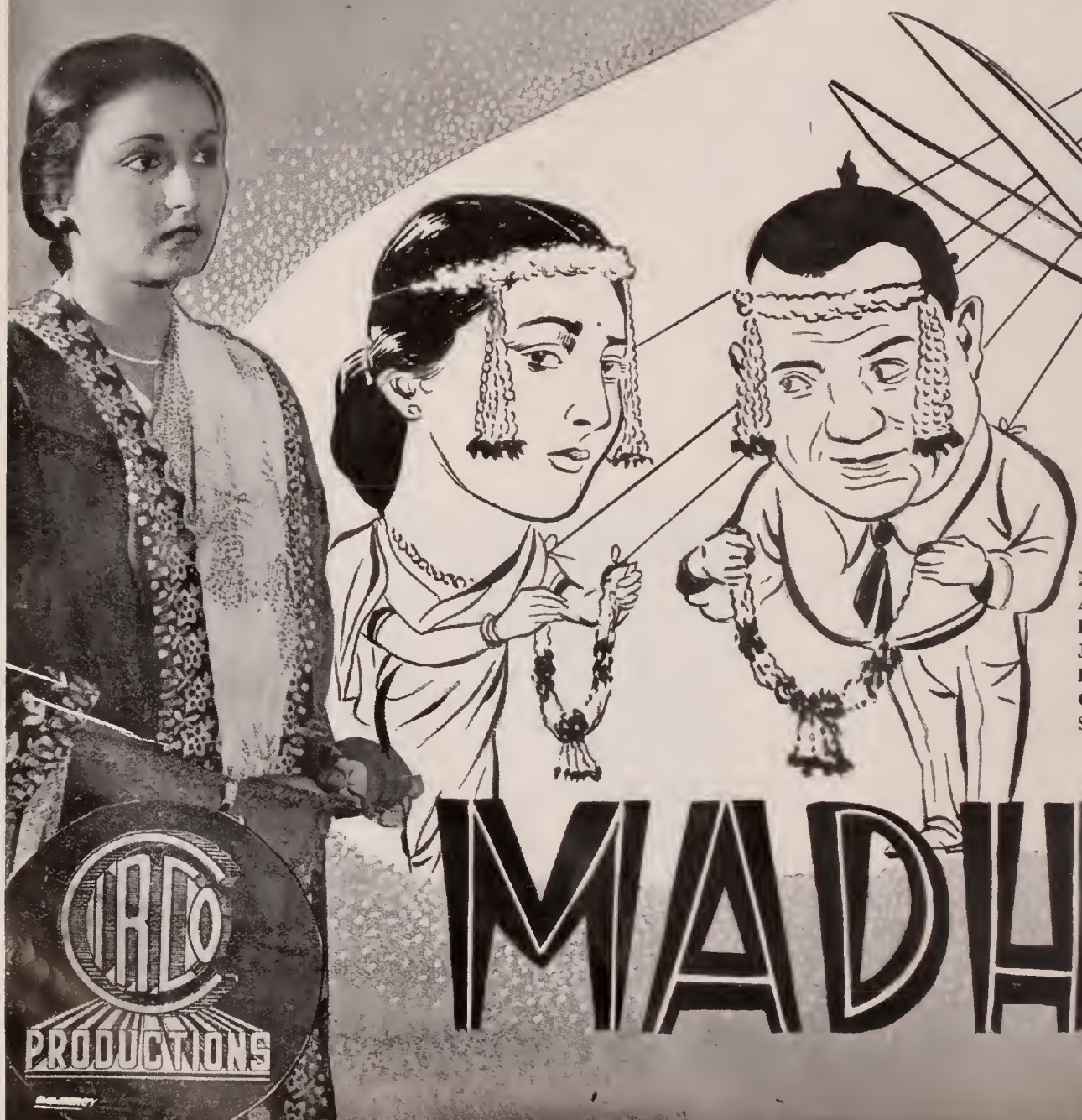
Shah Nawaz hasn't much to do except to annoy the sister of the hero with his presence, which he does.

The dance of Mumtaz Ali is unnecessary and unimpressive. It is there probably to meet the demand of the "Bombay Sentinel" which always goes crazy even if Mumtaz Ali's shadow falls on a set. That way, Rai Bahadur Chuni Lall is a very obliging person. He has a job for every one. But he shouldn't forget that people pay to see his pictures.

Well, "Punar Milan" has a lot of entertainment and if you have made your peace with the story, you can still settle down to enjoy the beautiful dancing and singing of little Snehaprabha.

He shouts for the safety of his sweetheart in "Punar Milan" where Mr. & Mrs. Kishore Sahu play together for the first time.

SCREEN'S CAMPAIGN
MARITAL FRANCHIS



Cast

KUMAR

MAYA BANE
ASHALATA
KASHINATH
JIVAN
BADRI PRAS.
GULAB
SHYAM SUN

MADHU

IRCO
PRODUCTIONS

OR
Directed by:
lwant Bhatt
SUDAN
From 15th Feb.'41
at
Imperial Cinema
Lamington Road,
BOMBAY

OUR CRITICISM

'PADOSI' India's Greatest Picture

Shantaram's Personal Triumph

Jayashree and Jagirdar Reach Heights of Popularity

Prabhat's "Padosi" is an event not merely in motion pictures but in the present day life of our country. With India becoming more and more politically minded every day and visualising her ultimate goal of freedom, the one thought of every national minded Indian is to brush away with one sweep the numerous obstacles that stand in the way of that goal. But in the life of a nation, time travels slow and the gains and the losses both in social and political fields come to us after a prolonged struggle which looks almost epic in the present-day fast moving world.

Saints and leaders have given the country their service and sacrifice for years but all their messages had to be translated either through the medium of the spoken word or through print. But the word of mouth or the word of print has its limitations in India with millions illiterate. On the other hand the motion picture has penetrated several parts of the country which neither a newspaper nor a public leader would think of exploiting.

Seeing a show recently of "Tukaram" in a village of Maharashtra, 40 miles from the nearest railway station, I was surprised to see a crowd of over 1,500 for an open air show in a village of hardly 300 souls. On inquiry I found that though that particular village had a weekly postal service it was still a good centre for collecting crowds from the neighbouring villages. For that show of "Tukaram" people had travelled as many as 30 miles with their wives, children and bullock carts.

That is an example of the pulling power of a motion picture which neither the newsprint nor the spoken word can excel.

With its soothing message through the eyes and the ears, "Padosi" therefore becomes a human document of great social and political importance with its tremendous power of propaganda harnessed for the future welfare of our country.

EFFECTIVE IN ITS APPEAL

All motion pictures are propaganda and the more subtle they are. the more effective they become. In this respect "Padosi" is perhaps the most subtle in its presentation and no where have the colourful threads in the design been allowed to break out glaringly from the apparently smooth pattern of the motion picture.

PADOSI

Producers:	*Prabhat Film Co.*
Story & Dialogues:	*Vishram Bedekar*
Hindi Translation And Songs	*Pandit Sudarshan*
Photography:	*V. Avadoot*
Recording:	*S. Damle*
Art Director:	*S. Fatehlal*
Music:	*Krishnarao*
Cast:	*Jayshree (Marathi) Date (Marathi) Anis, Jagirdar, Mazhar Khan, etc.*
Released At:	*Central Cinema*
Date of Release:	*25th Jan. '41.*

Direction: V. Shantaram.

Taking into consideration the present political impasse in our country and its slowly corroding effect on our social life, "Padosi" has come as a blessing from heaven to show to us the errors of our ways and to point to us a way towards a life of harmony and happiness.

But while the picture does this most effectively, its beauty lies in the beautiful cloak of its design and its successful pretence of being purely an entertainment fare without even the slightest pretensions to tell or teach any one anything. In its utter modesty the picture seems to cry out from the house tops: "Oh, it is a story of two villagers, two neighbours and their heart beats and heart breaks and for Heaven's sake don't misunderstand and see it from a wrong stand-point." And because this modesty is so apparently noticed, that people, though the producers don't desire so, see "Padosi" in the way it should be seen. For, isn't a motion picture a mirror of life in which we so often see things in the dark which are missed in the broad day light?

This is Shantaram

THE NEED OF TO-DAY

The momentous question is: Did we need "Padosi"? In answer one has just to look round himself and find seeds of hatred grown into thorny thickets of discontent which scratch and bleed when the parties on either side try to meet or exchange courtesies. Yes, our country never needed this picture more than now. But apart from our country the entire world to-day needs "Padosi." With the civil strife and bloodthirsty aspirations which modern civilization has imposed on the world that immortal message of Jesus Christ "Love Thy Neighbour As Thyself" was never more at a discount than to-day when man founds his future on the blood and

bones of his neighbour. "Padosi" is a picture which should have been produced in the numerous languages of the world and shown to the warring mass of humanity to help it to find the error of its ways.

And in giving "Padosi" its rural background, Shantaram its great director, has proclaimed to everyone that India is not made up of a few towns and cities but of innumerable villages and that the ultimate future of our nation lies in peace and harmony among their inhabitants.

JUST A PAGE FROM LIFE

Yes, it is a village story—simple and unsophisticated. It has no glamour to dazzle nor any spectacle to impress. But in its heart beats and heart breaks, it draws an echo from every human heart and one likes to live, inspite of oneself, in its simple smiles and clumsy sighs.

Thakur, the Hindu and Mirza, the Mahomedan—two villagers typical of the teeming millions in India—are neighbours. (Thakur and Mirza have been neighbours for centuries in India). Their world is small but it is complete in love, humanity and happiness. They have never travelled beyond the miles within the range of their eyes. But they have come a long way through centuries hand in hand—one leaning upon the other, from the cradle to the grave, leaving behind an heritage of love and brotherly trust and respect. They have never preached to each other. They have quarrelled sometimes but never remembered the cause. They found faults but never sat in judgment. They just lived lovingly, one happy in the friendly neighbourhood of the other, and in doing so they set an example to their own children.

AH! WHAT A FAMILY!

The story opens in a village typical of our 700,000 villages. The village has its complete family of men, women, children, bullocks, fowls, birds and its complete furniture of benches, carts, ploughs etc., and its complete setting of a river, mountains and wells. If one thing were missing the family would be incomplete and in furnishing the family thus with all its equipment on life's journey, Shantaram has shown a rare sense of detail. But his art becomes greater when all these members of the family, both mute and otherwise, play their parts in the composite scheme of their life, with an eloquence and precision that lend a breath of life even to the pile of a mountain which has been there through ages spreading its shade and blessing its subjects with a majesty which only mother nature can radiate.

In such peaceful surroundings Thakur and Mirza are introduced to the world. The camera has travelled a long way to do so and we find Thakur at his daily "Bhajan" which constitutes the reading of Ramayana. Almost instinctively Thakur realizes that the time for Mirza's prayers is at hand and with an accuracy born out of the spirit of accommodation he finishes his "Bhajan" just as Mirza steps out of his home with his prayer mat. With reciprocal feelings Mirza urges upon Thakur to proceed with his "Bhajan" saying that there is still a little more time for the prayers (Namaz). But smilingly Thakur turns down the grace and says "Mirza, we have been neighbours through years, but not once have you told me what you want" "Where is the necessity" replies Mirza, "when one gets everything without asking." And in these significant sentences is symbolised the spirit of accommodation that should exist between the two brothers that make India one big homeland of traditional love and sacrifice.

PULLING DOWN THE BARRIERS

The camera now enters the home of Thakur and in that Hindu home we find the wives of both the neighbours at a common household task helping each other. By placing them together thus, in a minute the imaginary wall that is sometimes allowed to be erected by orthodox elements between the two homes is pulled down unceremoniously, pointing out that communal barriers are too transparent between two loving neighbours.

Prayers over, Mirza and Thakur now sit for their daily game of chess—the only relaxation they enjoy in a routine life. But their devotion to the game had also made the chess one more item of their routine. That game soon becomes a battlefield of their intellectual skill

"Come," says Anis, "we will build a world of our own with sunshine and smiles." A scene in "Padosi" a Prabhat picture.

during which emotions often burst out in pet epithets against each other. These epithets are heard by Mirza's parrot who has come to learn them by heart, having heard them so often. That parrot, right from the first scene, becomes a symbolic evidence of an inevitable routine and by repeating his prattle takes an interesting part in the game of chess.

As the chessmen are being arranged on the checkered board, Mirza picks up a wrong piece when Thakur says "Eh, what are you dreaming of? You have taken the wrong piece" Mirza replies smilingly "That is the trouble with these chess pieces. When they lie in the basket, they are content to lie in the laps of one another but when they come on the chessboard, they fight like traditional enemies."

Thakur's reply is classic "No, Mirza they don't fight by themselves. We, the people behind, make them fight." A further explanation of this is hardly necessary. In this game a sally by Mirza about Thakur having met previously with an injury to the head has a pointed significance in the later scenes when Thakur gets intermittent attacks of semi lunacy. To prepare a ground so early for situations to be exploited in the final climax of the story is certainly a clever piece of direction.

As the game proceeds, the children manage to get mixed up in a petty quarrel and their noise compels both Mirza and Thakur to intervene. Strangely enough, Mirza is seen justifying the cause of Thakur's son and vice versa. But before the fathers could come to a settlement, the boys have settled their quarrel and are interestingly watching the quarrelsome progress of the two old men. Perhaps in prolonging the quarrel between the elders a little longer, the seeds are sown of a later scene when the old men actually quarrel with uncompromising spirit; though the young ones want them to make up.

SHANTARAM'S WAY OF KISSING

While the game proceeds we are introduced to a youthful romance between Gokul the son of Thakur and Girja the daughter of Omkar, the Managing Director of a dam constructing company. The location for the scene is the village outskirt where in the midst of trees a vibrant romance between the two lovers is shown. The technique used in taking a duet between the lovers symbolises the jumpy state of hearts in new love. The wild abandon with which the players behave is there to underline the spirit of youth which is carefree and careless. This scene however concludes on a very polite and graceful note. The boy has taken a tamarind and tasting it finds it sour but when his girl puts it to her lips and returns it to her lover, the tamarind becomes sweet. How cleverly has the kiss been interpreted and delivered.

Shantaram is certainly developing a new technique in love making, but one wonders whether a mere tamarind will satisfy when off the screen. And yet the polite suggestion of the kiss is a compliment to the sense of decency of the audience.

A PHASE OF CAPITALISM

Here it is necessary to explain in short the dependence of the village on the local dam and the servility of the villagers to Omkar the Mg. Director of the Dam Constructing Co. Omkar, goaded by his ambition, wants to construct a new dam which while it would bring in greater returns to his company, would submerge the village and the villagers would be lost.

At a meeting of the directors of his company Omkar explains this complicated project and assures them that they would get more profits and the obstacles of the villagers could be overcome by buying over their lands.

This scene is perhaps the poorest spot in the whole picture. Though Shantaram with his characteristic obstinacy insists on repeating that he had always intended the scene that way, yet we beg to defer and state that the scene is very sketchy, unnecessarily complicated and poorly done. The very choice of the actor for the part of Omkar is wrong and poor. Imagine a half-starved capitalist as Kashyap looks in this role. An ideal parallel for a role like that is Edward Arnold. Shantaram has failed to establish the greed of the capitalist forcefully and merely skirted on the fringe of this aspect.

This parrot becomes the symbolic evidence of an inevitable routine in "Padosi" a Prabhat picture.

JAIRAM—THE FOREIGNER'S TOOL

Omkar next addresses the villagers and with the help of Jairam a local sponger, he is on the point of obtaining their consent for the sale of the village lands, but Gokul ignites the opposition which is later on taken by Mirza and Thakur.

While opposing the demands of Omkar, Thakur bursts out into one of the best emotional perorations ever heard on the screen and tells the capitalist what exactly a village means to the villagers. He concludes on a high note, "This is not merely a piece of land. This land is our mother. I have heard instances of starving mothers selling their sons. But never have I heard of a son selling his mother. And if there is such a cursed man among us who says that give me money and I am prepared to auction my mother, let him come out and say so."

This decides the villagers who refuse to sell their lands and Omkar leaves the place in a fury....After this Shantaram makes rather a crude attempt to show the storm of indignation in Omkar by giving us one of those short-lived, thinking, and made-to-order storms which we are expected to take as symbolisms of the storms within the players. This is at best a clumsy sequence and does not add to the great reputation of the director.

DIVIDE AND RULE

Next day in keeping with the divide and rule traditions of those in power Omkar dismisses Thakur from his job. For a moment Thakur looks at Mirza with an unexpressed wish that Mirza should follow him. But just then Mirza's vacillating thoughts are suppressed by a stern order by Omkar to resume work, The stern voice of the master nips the budding revolt in Mirza, but as Thakur walks away disconsolate Mirza runs up to him and says "Listen Brother, we have been neighbours through life. Even if you lose work we shall still be neighbours. Even if I work alone we can still share the bread together." But Thakur's senses are benumbed with the shock of losing his job.

And here comes the subtle Shantaram touch in bringing Jairam, the sponger, on the spot and whispering to Thakur, "Oh, now I understand why Mirza had come to see Omkar yesterday."

Like a poison the words corrode the heart of the struggling Thakur and he gives one disdainful look at Mirza going down to work. This particular camera shot taken from an elevation has a psychological importance in showing Mirza not only going down the steps but also going down in the estimation of Thakur.

THE POISON WORKS

The story now comes back to its old setting of the homes and we find Thakur sitting under one tree and Mirza under another. Between their hearts has now come an invisible wall of suspicion. Thakur thinks—due to the poison drops of Jairam—that Mirza had manoeuvred his dismissal. And Mirza though desirous of taking a more broader view of the whole affair is still silenced into submission to the suspicious mood of his friend and meets Thakur's militant silence with

"No, Brother, I shall not leave you again," says Mirza, "We shall now be neighbours through eternity." The final climax between Jagirdar and Mazhar Khan in "Padosi" a Prabhat picture.

his own passive and sympathetic one. The passive attitude of Mirza seems to enrage Thakur even more and strengthens the suspicion in his mind.

This strained atmosphere is suddenly broken by the parrot's "Well, Thakur, did you finish your "bhajan." For a moment, the friends react to this sound in their natural way but as quickly they recover their new poise of militant silence.

This mood of the elders has imposed itself on the entire household and the two little boys Akbar and Sarju, divining the trouble, take a hand at solving the same. They start playing chess at the usual place. As the game proceeds and as the boys quarrel, the elders gradually get interested till the boys are lifted and kept aside and Thakur and Mirza are in the midst of the play to the utter relief of every one. Just then the parrot says "Coward" and the memory of that word so often uttered in previous games brings Thakur back to his sullen mood. The game is spoiled and friendship is once again strained. This scene is a masterpiece of psychological direction and in its gradual development is seen the great art of the director.

UNSEEN BEFORE

Elsewhere Gokul and Girja meet in a lover's quarrel which as usual ends in a reconciliation. But this time Jairam makes an unwelcome appearance on the scene and annoys Gokul. Gokul threatens to burn down his house.

Now we are taken to the best dance sequence that has ever appeared on the Indian screen. It is a community dance of torches. Beautiful in composition, exquisite in execution and masterly in presentation it is certainly a pictorial high light of the picture. In a cut aside are shown Girja and Gokul doing the torch dance. The rhythm of the dance travels with a terrific speed and the lovers are happy on their way home when the way is cut short by the sudden flooding from the dam by Jairam. Jairam also rushes with a torch and sets fire to his own house and soon runs about accusing Gokul.

We are now taken to a community meeting and Mirza is sitting in judgment over the offence of Gokul. Gokul is accused of arson and all the circumstantial evidence leads to his conviction. Gokul cannot tell. even in self-defence that he was with Girja at the time of the fire for fear of compromising her position. Thakur knows that his son is not guilty and he raves like a mad man accusing Mirza of ruining him and his family. Mirza however has to dispense justice and he directs that Gokul should pay the price of the house and a hundred rupees more as a fine.

Later on Mirza is relieved to hear from Gokul that he had not burnt the house.

DISSECTION OF THE HEART

This decision makes Thakur more furious. He beats his head and raves and now openly abuses Mirza. Jairam relentless in his vengeance comes to his door and demands the money. Thakur has nothing to give but Mirza goes to his own savings and takes a gold ornament from his wife's neck to make up the deficit and throws all at Jairam and asks him to clear out. But Jairam's interpretation of this action as adding insult to injury exasperates Thakur who is on the point of kicking the money away. But Mirza stops him saying that there was his wife's necklace in it too.

Jayshree is angling in shallow waters and strangely enough she did catch a gold fish in "Shejari" a Prabhat picture.

Thakur's temper now reaches a crescendo and so does the scene travel to a climax. He abuses Mirza mercilessly and gives an ultimatum that either Mirza should leave his home or he would. Mirza had borne a lot for friendship and neighbourhood, but the limit had reached now and in a fitful temper he decides to leave the home—rather two homes, his own and Thakur's—also his own.

The most pathetic sequence in the picture is now reached as Mirza goes with his family, cattle, fowls, sheep and odds and ends to another place. The fowls also take unkindly to the poisonous atmosphere and stage a fight. Tears flow profusely as the single heart of the two neighbours is cut in two. Finally, Mirza throws the basket of chess pieces on the ground saying "Let them lie there—a graveyard of the neighbours and a carcass of our friendship."

ELOQUENT MISERY

In the frenzy, Thakur slips and falls down and gets a hit on the head which henceforward gives him attacks of intermittent madness.

The neighbourhood which had stood the test of a life time was debauched because foreign interests chose to interfere. A friendship that had rolled several hearts into one was now broken because outsiders had created separate interests for them.

Both became miserable—Mirza and Thakur. People talked about them and with every new day the morale of the villagers was going down. Omkar was now ready to

take the lands at his own prices. People were ready to sell.

Everyone was miserable. Gokul, Nayeem, Thakur, Mirza, Girja, the children, the village, even the sad mountain air except Jairam and Omkar.

Gokul decides to end it all by blowing off the old dam with dynamite and ruining the Dam Construction Co. But the thought of a crime makes him uneasy. He becomes secretive and cannot eat well. He is missing during the nights and everyone is worried. But with cold determination every night he charges the dam at several places with dynamite. The ceaseless and feverish digging continues and its sound spreads over the other sequences making the terrible mission more fearful and ever present. Nayeem has found out the intentions of Gokul and he informs Girja.

A DREAMLAND OF HOPES

Girja rushes to Gokul and finds him with the dynamite. She urges the plea of her love—pleads, weeps and ultimately paints an illusive word picture of their future happiness together.

In the midst of those fast rushing scenes comes an illusion of idyllic beauty wherein a dream land of wedded bliss is created. Superb artistry of technic is evident in taking these scenes. A soaring flight of creative imagination is used in making the reflection in water of Girja and Gokul travel to the dreamland.

But ultimately duty overwhelms personal considerations and Girja resigns herself to her fate and leaves Gokul to follow his destiny.

But when Gokul goes to the dam. he is intercepted by Nayeem, who overpowers Gokul and ties him to a tree.

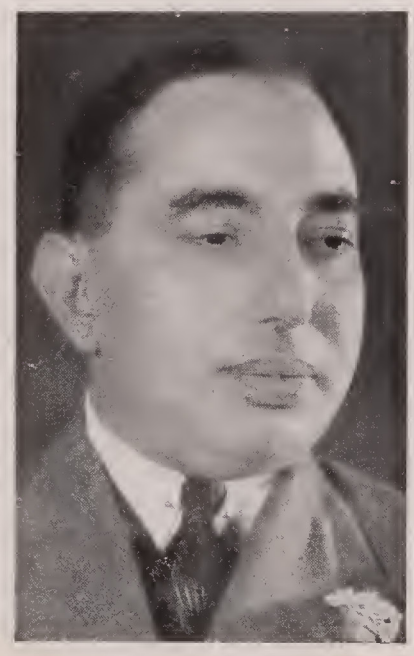
In the village in the meanwhile, Girja goes to Thakur and tells him of the danger, Gokul is in. Thakur rushes to the dam and arrives just in time to prevent Nayeem from igniting the gun-powder.

This tussle between Thakur and Nayeem in which Nayeem tries an argument of his being Mirza's son to persuade Thakur from stopping him, is portrayed in an affectionate strain in which Thakur with his characteristic roughness threatens Nayeem with punishment if he disobeys the old man.

Thakur drags Nayeem with the burning torch in his hand and takes him over the dam and in the subsequent struggle wrests the torch from him and throws it below. Unfortunately the burning torch falls accidentally on the gun-powder and lights up the dynamite charges one after another.

THE LAST RITE OF FRIENDSHIP

Thakur is caught in the midst of it all and cut off from the villagers who gather in crowds. Mirza also comes and forgetting the erstwhile bitterness of feelings, rushes to the rescue of Thakur. Thakur who is however stunned by the loud reports of dynamite lapses into his usual fit of lunacy and sits down to play chess on the gravel, unaware of the danger he is in. Mirza drags him but very soon both are caught in the whirl of danger and blown with the dam to eternity.



Rai Bahadur Chuni Lall, Vice-President of the Motion Picture Society of India and General Manager of the Bombay Talkies has been appointed for the third time in succession on the Bombay Board of Film Censors by joint recommendation of the Society and the Indian Film Producers' Association. Our film industry could not have got a more conscientious worker than the Rai Bahadur to represent its interests on the Board of Censors.

The ending dialogues are very touching.

Thakur: "I hope you will not leave me again. Will you brother?"

Mirza: "No brother! No! May Allah have mercy on us. We shall now be neighbours through eternity."

The next day their corpses are found in the stream with their hands clasped in an eternal bond of indisputable friendship and neighbourhood.

Thus ends the story of two neighbours—of two friends—of two human beings, who were born as twins in the single cradle of their motherland, who travelled together through a life time hand in hand and were again received together by Mother Earth in her very same lap.

Can death ever be more immortal? When such neighbours die who loses? None but the world they lived in. And the world—our world is becoming poorer and poorer day by day as in its distant corners the Thakurs and Mirzas are dying every day leaving behind a flaming memory in their final hand-clasp reminding generations to come of what the Martyr of Bethlehem said "Love Thy Neighbour As Thyself."

THE PRODUCTION VALUES

Turning to the production values of the picture, one thing must be remembered that it is a Shantaram picture and at that Shantaram's best.

The story is studded with symbolisms which lend to the picture an artistic soul dazzling in its soaring flight of imagination. There is no necessity of wasting words on Shantaram's direction. It is like

painting the lily. He is the greatest director India has and threatens to monopolise that exclusive position for a long time to come.

Photography is vivid and breathes life into the scenes. The sound is superb. The music is excellent. The dances are spectacular and novel. The Hindi dialogues of Pandit Sudarshan are however too poor in comparison with the Marathi dialogues of Bedekar.

The Marathi dialogues have for the first time become beautifully effective and purposeful. Vishram Bedekar, the story writer, takes our salute for giving a screen play that compels the audience to play their part in the drama unfolded before them. Bedekar certainly strikes us as one of the best screen writers we have in the country and perhaps the best in the world of Maharashtrian writers. And one wonders where this jewel was hidden so long.

THE PERFORMANCES

Jagirdar—Gajanan Jagirdar to pin him to a point—is just great in the role of Mirza. The way he has played it, perhaps no one else could have done better. Is greater praise necessary?

"I am now on the throne of justice with God as my witness," says Mirza (Jagirdar), "and none in the world belongs to me."

Jayshree, the glamour girl of 1941, threatens to become the sweet sigh of millions. Like a well tempered blade of steel Jayshree flashes fast and true, dazzling every one with her just budding sex and leaving behind an undefinable ache that urges to see more and even more of her. She is a star to-day but none can say to what heights she will reach tomorrow.

Between Mazhar as Thakur in the Hindi version and Date as Jiwba in the Marathi one a better histrionic performance—only a shade better—was given by Date but in diction and dialogues Mazhar has left Date far far behind. Date seems to be having a very unsympathetic voice for the microphone. Speaking of Mazhar alone, he has never before worked better in his entire screen career.

Between Chandrakant as Raiba in the Marathi version and Balwant Singh as Gokul in the Hindi one, Chandrakant gave a more favourable impression. In comparison with him Balwant Singh looked too poor. Balwant Singh's dance, however, had more rhythm.

In fine, "Padosi" is a picture which can well be considered as a work of a life-time and even if Shantaram had produced only this one picture, he would still remain a great director of all times.

(*Con. from page 5*)

story to be considered under the surface of an everyday occurrence.

THE SCOPE IN INDIA

This is the job of documentary in India. To show India as it is today. The world knows little of the real India. The film has mostly shown an India of Romance —an India of Maharajas and elephants and magnificence—of lovely palaces shining across still waters and of ancient temples sleeping in the sun.

Begging for a stardom! Poor Motilal! He has to do that in "Pardesi" a Ranjit picture.

Now is the turn of everyday India to take her place on the screen. With such a wealth of material to offer, India presents a problem to the film maker, a problem of selection from such riches. Shall we make a film of the fishermen of Madras or the factory worker of Bengal? Of the agriculturist of Bombay or of a villager of the Punjab? Shall we tell the world about the Nagas of Assam or of the cotton workers of Cawnpore? There are many stories to be told about peoples' jobs in India. The work of an Indian district officer or of a Hooghli pilot might provide us with an absorbing story.

There are a thousand stories of Indian life to be told on the screen, and if these stories are told well and honestly, the 'propaganda' work will be carried out, *because the best sort of propaganda one can do is to tell people the truth and let them make up their minds themselves.*

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